THE TRYAL OF *SPIRITS*,

BOTH IN

Teachers and Hearers,

Wherein is held forth

The clear Diſcovery, and certain Downfal, of the CARNAL and ANTICHRISTIAN CLERGY of theſe Nations:

Teſtified from the *Word* of *God*

To the UNIVERSITY Congregations

In CAMBRIDGE.

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LONDON:

Re-printed and Sold at the *Bible* in *George-Yard*, *Lombard-ſtreet*, MDCCXXXIX.

[Price One Shilling]

BRITISH MUSEUM
15 JUN 68

To all the truly Faithful, the very little Flock of Chriſt in theſe Nations, now deſpiſed and almoſt worn out (according to the Propheſies) for the Word of God, *and Teſtimony which they hold.*

Grace be multiplied unto you, and Peace, from God *our* Father, *and the* Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *our* Head, *and* Hope.

I Could not chuſe but diſtinguiſh you thus, from all the reſt of the People of theſe Nations of what Condition or Quality ſoever, ſeeing God himſelf hath firſt done it, having choſen you to himſelf in Chriſt, and ſet you apart for himſelf, as a *peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* And I have choſen to ſpeak this only to you, becauſe *you are all taught of God*, and have heard and learned from him the Truth as it is in Jeſus; and becauſe you have an inward Unction from God, whereby you know the Truth from Error, tho' it be never ſo much reproached by carnal Chriſtians; and whereby you know Error from the Truth, though it be never ſo much exalted and magnified by them. You are thoſe ſpiritual Men who judge all Things, becauſe you have received the Word and Spirit of Judgment in Chriſt, from the

Father; Beſides, you are the Men whom God will uſe in his greateſt and moſt glorious Works, which he hath yet to do in the World, *to wit*, in the Deſtruction of the Kingdom of Antichriſt, and the ſetting up, and enlarging the Kingdom of Chriſt; which Things are not to be done by the Might and Power of Worldly Magiſtrates, (which it may be you have not received, and if you had, it would not be helpful here) but by the Spirit of the Lord, which you all have received in ſome Meaſure. Yea farther, none but you will be contented to live by Faith, and to follow Chriſt in untrodden Paths, and to undertake impoſſible Works to Fleſh and Blood; and none but you will be willing to have the Reſidue of Chriſt's Life and Works, and of his Sufferings and Death, fulfilled in your mortal Bodies.

It grieves me much to ſee ſo many Men as I have known once hopeful in the *Army*, and elſe where, to be now ſo full gorged with the Fleſh of *Kings*, and *Nobles* and *Captains*, and *mighty Men*, that is, with their Eſtates, Mannors, Houſes, Parks, Lands, *&c.* that they can now be contented to take their Eaſe, and to comply with the World and worldly Church, and the Teachers thereof, and can perſwade themſelves, that there is enough done for their Time, after it hath fared thus well with them; and can leave the Remainder to Men that are as plain & mean as themſelves were at firſt, forgetting Him *who remembred them when they were in low Condition*. But they that were indeed righteous among them are righteous ſtill, and they that were indeed holy, are holy ſtill, and *Proſperity hath only ſlain the Fools*, as the Scriptures ſpeak. But you Chriſtians

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ſtians are called Choſen & Faithful, & you will ſtill be found with the Lamb on Mount *Sion*, & with the reſt who have his Name, and his Father's Name, written in their Foreheads, and you dare ſtill own the Ancient Truth, Cauſe and Work of Chriſt, how great Diſadvantage ſoever is for the preſent riſen up againſt it, thro' the Apoſtaſie of carnal Chriſtians, the Lovers of this World. And you all know, that all that hath been done hitherto by the Sword, is but the Preparation of Chriſt's Way to his Work, and that the Work itſelf is ſtill behind, and to be done by thoſe Worthies of the Lord who love Jeſus Chriſt and his Kingdom, and Coming, a thouſand times better than the preſent World, and all the beſt things of it, yea their own Lives. Wherefore I adviſe you all, to whom now I ſpeak, to take heed that you neither drink nor ſip of the *Clergies Cup*, which carries in it *the Wine of the Wrath of the Fornication of* Antichriſt; leſt, having drank thereof, you fall aſleep through the Strength of their Inchantments, and ſo are rendred unable to follow Chriſt any farther. For many Powers and Magiſtrates of the World, once hopeful, have been thus overcome and ſeduced into Antichriſt's Cauſe againſt Chriſt, to their utter Ruin in the end. And how have the preſent Clergy, with their moſt plauſible Men, attempted ſome of this preſent Power; yea, ſome of the very Chiefeſt and moſt Godly in the *Army*, and have put into ſome (that I ſay not) great Danger? Wherefore remember you that Word of the Lord ſpoken by his Angel, *Rev.* xiv. 9, 10. *If any Man worſhip the Beaſt and his Image, and receive his Mark in his Forehead, or in his Hand, the ſame ſhall drink of the Wine*

Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out without Mixture into the Cup of his Indignation, &c.

IF ANY MAN WORSHIP THE BEAST, that is, the Antichriſtian Church of the *Pope* and his *Prelates*, and *Clergy*, which is called the *Beaſt*, becauſe of its Fierceneſs and Cruelty againſt the Saints: Or, HIS IMAGE, that is, the Church or the *Biſhops* and *Presbyters*, which in a leſſer Volume, and leſs Letters, doth anſwer the other, and is directly like it. Whoever ſhall WORSHIP THESE, that is, highly eſteem them for their Humane Learning, and School-Divinity, and Sacredneſs of their Order, and count them worthy of all Honour and Reſpect, and worldly Maintenance, & alſo to have Power in matter of Religion, to allow and determine of Doctrine, and to appoint and inſtitute in Matters of Government: And being Worldly Powers, do ſubject themſelves, and all the Worldly People under them, to theſe Mens Religion, Authority, Doctrine, Diſcipline *&c.* Whoever ſhall thus worſhip them: Or, SHALL RECEIVE HIS MARK, that is, this Principal, that, *It is lawful to puniſh and perſecute Men in Matters that meerly relate to Faith and the Goſpel*, and this under pretence of the Glory of God, and Good of Chriſtian People; which is the BEASTS MARK in every Age, and under every Change of Outward Form: Whoever ſhall receive this Mark IN THEIR FOREHEAD, that is, to execute according to *Laws*, which the Nations have been ſeduced to make to this Purpoſe; The ſame ſhall drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into

to

to the Cup of Indignation, and he ſhall be tormented with Fire and Brimſtone in the Preſence of the holy Angels, and in the Preſence of the Lamb, and the Smoak of their Torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever.

Wherefore you faithful Ones have great Cauſe to be very well adviſed in theſe Things, ſeeing the chief Deſign of Antichriſt, is to ſeduce the Elect, ſeeing he hath no Body elſe in all the World that dare oppoſe him, or know how to do it, but you; and he knows, if he can prevail with you, all the World beſides will follow him headlong, as the *Gadarens* Swine ran into the Sea, and were choaked.

Now I have adventured, thro' the Inſpiration of the Almighty, to undertake openly and plainly againſt the Clergy and Univerſities, which in their preſent State, are the Reſidue of the Hour and Power of Darkneſs upon the Nations: And the Lord of his Grace hath helped me thro' this Work, by his Spirit of Counſel and Might. And ſo I have freely and willingly expoſed my ſelf for Chriſt and his Truth's Sake, to all the Reproaches, Slanders, Revilings, Contradictions (and if their Power ſhall ſerve) Perſecutions of the Univerſities and Clergy, and of all thoſe People high and low, bond and free, who have received their Mark and Worſhip them; chooſing rather to ſuffer with Chriſt, and with you, his Seed, all manner of Tribulations, than to reign with them; and much rather imbracing Chriſtian Communion, with poor plain Husbandmen and Tradeſmen, who believe in Chriſt, and have received his Spirit, than with the Heads of the Univerſities, and higheſt and ſtateliеſt of the Clergy, who under a ſpecious Form of Godlineſs,

lineſs, do yet live in true Enmity and Oppoſition to the Goſpel,

I do indeed freely acknowledge, that I have often been ready to complain to God in the Anguiſh of my Spirit, that he had called me, a very bruiſed Reed, to a more difficult Task, in one Regard, than either *Wickliffe*, *Hus*, or *Luther*, thoſe ſtrong Pillars in the Houſe of God; to wit, becauſe much of the groſs Body of Antichriſtianiſm, againſt which they chiefly ingaged, being done away by their Miniſtry, there ſtill remains the cunning and ſubtil Soul and Spirit thereof, which yet is All in All, in Antichriſt's Kingdom, tho' it be farther removed from the Knowledge and Notice of the common Sort of Chriſtians. And ſo Myſtery of Iniquity, is now become more myſterious and deceiving than in their Times; and as perfect and bitter Enmity againſt Chriſt and his Spirit, and the true Temple of God, the ſpiritual Church, as ever was in all their Times, doth now prevail under the Name of Orthodox Doctrine, and the Reformation of Religion, by the late Aſſembly of Divines, which the Clergy are all now ready to ſet up, if they get the ſecular Arm to ſtrengthen them thereunto, of which now they have greateſt Hopes, and without which, their Religion can find no high Place in the World.

Now wherein the old Myſtery of Iniquity is renewed among theſe Men, that they would have an outward Letter and Miniſtry of the New Teſtament, which is the Miniſtration of the Spirit and not of the Letter, and would have the ſecular Magiſtrate, to have Right and Power, to enforce Men to ſuch a Religion, as himſelf

ſelf judges true, by the Help and Counſel of thoſe Miniſters, which himſelf judges Orthodox: As if ſome Men were able to teach ſpiritual Things, and all to underſtand them by natural Reaſon made Uſe of, and improved, which yet theſe Men deny in *Terminis*, whilſt they aſſert it in the Principle. For, they will not leave it to the Father, to draw whom he pleaſeth to the Son; neither will they leave it to the Spirit, to chooſe what living Stones he pleaſeth, to build them together, to be the Habitation of God: But the Eccleſiaſtical State, having ſeduced the Temporal, to make them believe that the Magiſtrates worldly Power, in Union with their worldly Religion, may make a national Church of all, that they between themſelves, pleaſe; and may allow, and ſet up, ſuch a Doctrine for Orthodox, which theſe Men, who are in Academical Degrees, and Eccleſiaſtical Orders, do approve for ſuch; tho' the Spirit of God in all Believers, teſtifies that theſe Men have not the Mind of Chriſt, but of Antichriſt, in all they teach, and act, and counſel; in their Aſſemblies, Churches, Doctrine, Ordinances, Works, Duties, Days, Times, Faſtings, Thankſgivings, and every Thing elſe: Yet theſe having the outward Carcaſs or Appearance of Religion, tho' deſtitute of the inward Soul of it, which is true Faith and the Spirit of God, to cozen not only the meaner People but the very Magiſtrates of the World, who are glad to hear, that the Clergy hath given them ſuch high Power in the Kingdom of Chriſt, and made them Magiſtrates in both Worlds; tho' indeed in the End, it be not forthe Magiſtrates Advantage, but wholly for the Clergies.

And thus is the Myſtery of Iniquity grown more Myſterious now than heretofore. But this is our Comfort and Help, that God ſtill cauſes his Light to ſhine forth proportionably to his People, to diſcover every new Change and Form of the Myſtery of Iniquity. And tho' the Myſtery of Iniquity in every Age, is myſterious enough, to cozen all the unbelieving World, tho' never ſo wiſe and learned; yet it is never able to deceive the Faithful, who have always ſufficient Light from God to diſcover it, and ſufficient Grace to overcome it.

And now you faithful and beloved Ones, to whom I have ſpoken all this, ſtand you faſt, and depart not from Chriſt, his Word and Work, all which you know in Faith, for any good or evil Things that may befal you in this ſhort Life; but finiſh in Faith and Patience, the Work which God hath given you to do, in your ſeveral Places, waiting for the Glory which ſhall be given you at the Revelation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; in whom I remain, though moſt unworthy,

Your humble and faithful Servant

in the Goſpel,

W. D.

THE

THE
Tryal of Spirits.

1 John iv. 1. *Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they are of God, because many false Prophets are gone forth into the World.*

2. *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is of God.*

3. *And every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is not of God: And this is that Spirit of Antichrist whereof you have heard, that it should come, and even now already it is in the World.*

4. *Ye are of God, little Children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World.*

5. *They are of the World, therefore speak they of the World, and the World hears them.*

6. *We are of God; he that knows God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error.*

IN this Scripture we may take notice of these six Things,

Six observable things in this Scripture.

1. The Apostle gives notice to the beloved Congregations of spiritual Christians, of a great Evil risen up in the World, which, if not carefully heeded, might occasion some great Trouble and Danger to them; *Many false Prophets*, saith he, *are gone out into the World*, vers. 1.

2. He preſcribes them a ſufficient Remedy againſt this Evil, ſaying, *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they are of God.*

3. That the Faithful may be able to make a right Judgment of Spirits, he gives them one ſhort Rule of Trial, which yet comprehends in it ſelf all Rules; verſ. 2, and 3. *Hereby know we the Spirit of God; every Spirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh, is of God; and every Spirit that confeſſeth not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh, is not of God,* &c.

4. He ſhews them with whom theſe falſe Prophets, who have the Spirit of Antichriſt, ſhould not prevail; to wit, with none of the true Chriſtians of God, *v.* 4. *Ye are of God, little Children, and have overcome them; becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World.*

5. He ſhews them with whom the falſe Prophets ſhould prevail, to wit, with the World and carnal Peope; *v.* 5. *They are of the World, therefore ſpeak they of the World, and the World heareth them.* The World ſeeking its own Things, receives Antichriſt, and his Prophets.

6. He ſhews how the Spirit of Truth and Error may be known in the People, as well as in the Teachers; to wit, by the Peoples cleaving, either to the Teachers of Truth, or to the Teachers of Error; *v.* 6. *We are of God, he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error.*

Theſe ſix Things are held forth to us in this Scripture, and they are all very profitable and neceſſary for the true Church to be acquainted with, eſpecially in theſe laſt of the laſt Times. I ſhall begin with the firſt, which is,

The

The First Point.

1 Point.

The great and dangerous Evil, of which the Apostle gives Notice to the Church of Believers; and that is, *The going out of false Prophets into the World.*

The great evil endangering the Church.

Many false Prophets are gone out into the World.

AND here it is to be noted, that from the very Beginning of the World there have been two Seeds or Generations of Men, very contrary the one to the other, as is evident in *Gen.* iii. 15. where God saith to the Serpent, *I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed*; so that the Serpent hath his Seed, as well as the Woman her Seed; and this was the Woman's Curse, to have her *Sorrows* and *Conceptions multiplied*, and to bring forth the Serpent's Seed, as well as her own, that is the Children or Seed of the first Blessing; and both these contrary Seeds do partake of one and the same common Nature or Humanity. And one of these Seeds are called the *Sons of God*; the other, the *Sons of Men*, Gen. vi. 6. and both these being the Children of one *Adam* according to the Flesh, are yet distinguished by several Spirits that dwell in them, and inspire them: For the Spirit of God, that is, the Spirit of Righteousness and Truth, doth inspire the one; and these are truly called the *Children of God*, as *Paul* saith, *Rom.* viii. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.* And the Spirit of Satan, which is the Spirit of Wickedness and Error, doth inspire the other; and these are truly called the *Sons of Men*, who all *have sinned, and are deprived of the Glory of God.*

Note. Two contrary Seeds from the beginning of the World.

The two Seeds distinguished by the Spirit that dwells in them.

They act differently about Mankind.

Now these two different and contrary Spirits, which have dwelt in these two distinct Seeds, have begun to act presently from the very Beginning of the World, each one according to its own Nature, and to trade and traffick about Mankind, and out of it, to bring forth Children to themselves, like to themselves in all things; and so one hath endeavoured to beget and bring forth the Children of God and of Truth; the the other, the Children of Men and of Error: And to this end, the one hath held forth the Truth of God by the true Spirit of God; the other hath held forth Error and Falshood, yet as it were the Truth: The one hath endeavoured to bring Man unto God thro' true Faith and Repentance; the other to turn Men from God thro' Sin: The one hath sought to work Salvation in Men; the other Destruction.

The false Spirit the most common in the World.

Now the false Spirit hath been the most common in the World, and hath had the greatest Opportunities and Advantages to multiply it self, seeing it finds the whole World already lying in Wickedness, and fully prepared to receive it self. But the true Spirit hath been found in very few, and that from the Beginning; for there have been but few true Prophets, who have had the true Spirit, and have spoken the true Word; as you may see all along in Scriptures, especially in the times of *Elijah* and *Micajah*; but Christ saith, *Many false Prophets shall arise and deceive many*; and *Peter* saith in his second Epistle, Ch. ii. *v.* 1, 2. *That as there were false Prophets among the People*, that is the *Jews*, so there shall be false Doctors & Teachers among the Christians, who should *privily bring in damnable Heresies*; and *that many should follow their pernicious Ways.*

The true Spirit more scarce.

So

So that, as there have been many falſe Prophets from the Beginning, ſo eſpecially in the Days of the New Teſtament; for the more Chriſt hath appeared by his Spirit to lead Men into Truth, the more hath the Devil appeared by his Spirit to lead Men into Error; and this is properly called *Antichriſt*: For Fleſh and Blood is not Antichriſt, but a Spirit contrary to Chriſt's Spirit, that dwells in Fleſh & Blood, and chiefly among thoſe that profeſs the Chriſtian Religion: This is *Antichriſt*.

No Spirit, in the *Jews* or *Gentiles*, is properly called Antichriſt, but the Spirit of Satan in falſe Chriſtians, appearing as an Angel of Light; this is Antichriſt. Before Chriſt came in the Fleſh, the Devil was an evil Spirit, and a Lyar, and a Murderer, and the unclean Spirit, and Prince of this World; but he was not properly Antichriſt, becauſe Chriſt was not then come in the Fleſh. The Devil was the Devil before, and did dwell and work in evil Men; but from the Beginning of the Chriſtian Church he is called Antichriſt, and that not every where, but in the Church or Kingdom of Chriſt: For Antichriſt is a Spirit that diſſolves Jeſus, and that not openly, but ſubtilly and cunningly, yea, under the Name and Pretence of Jeſus he is wholly contrary to him. Wherefore, the Diſcerning of Spirits, as it hath been neceſſary from the Beginning of the World, ſo alſo it is eſpecially neceſſary in the Days of the Goſpel, wherein the Myſtery of Iniquity is become moſt myſterious, thro' the Operation of Antichriſt, in thoſe *many falſe Prophets which are gone forth into the World*. And ſo we proceed to the ſecond Point.

2. *Point.*

The Second Point.

The Remedy against false Prophets.

And that is this, *That sufficient Remedy, which the Apostle prescribes to the true Church against that great Evil of many false Prophets being gone out into the World.*

Now the *Remedy* the Apostle prescribes to the Faithful against these false Prophets, is not that they should stir up the *secular Power* to imprison, banish or burn them, that so they might be rid of them; for this is Antichrist's proper Remedy against those that oppose him; but the Apostle shews a more Christian Remedy, which is this, *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God*; and this Remedy alone is sufficient for the true spiritual Church of the Faithful in every Age, to preserve it safe and sound against all false Teachers whatsoever, and their false Doctrines: neither doth it desire or need any other. Wherefore in this Place the Apostle contents himself to give only this Caution to the Faithful, *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God.*

Note.

Believe not every Spirit, &c. that is, every one that speaketh of spiritual things. Whence it is plain, that we neither ought rashly and hastily to believe every Man's Doctrine, nor yet rashly and unadvisedly to censure and condemn it, till it be heard and known what it is: But it is a Christian's Duty to *prove all Things, and to hold fast that which is good*, upon Proof, as *Paul* adviseth; wherefore *John* also adds here, *but try the Spirits whether they be of God.*

Christians have right and power to try Spirits.

Whence we note, *That Christians have Right and Power to try and judge the Spirits and Doctrines*

of

of their Teathers: And this is evident by many plain Scriptures, as

Mat. vii. 15. *Beware of falſe Prophets,* ſaith Chriſt to the Faithful, *which come unto you in Sheeps Cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves; ye ſhall know them by their Fruits.*

Mat. xvi. 6. *Jeſus ſaid unto them, Take heed and beware of the Leaven of the* Phariſees, *which is Hypocriſy.*

Mat. xxiv. 4. *Jeſus ſaid, Take heed that no Man deceive you, for many ſhall come in my Name, ſaying, I am Chriſt, and ſhall deceive many.*

John x. *My Sheep hear my Voice, and know my Voice, and a Stranger will they not hear, but flee from him, for they know not,* (that is, *own not*) *the Voice of Strangers. And all that came before me are Thieves and Robbers, but the Sheep did not hear them.*

By all which Scriptures, and many more that might be added, it is manifeſt, that the Faithful, the true Sheep of Chriſt, have Right and Power to judge of the Spirits and Doctrines of the Teachers.

Let *Fathers, School-men, Doctors, Councels, Aſſemblies of Divines, Univerſities, Miniſters,* propound and publiſh what Doctrine they pleaſe, the Sheep of Chriſt, the faithful Flock, have Power and Authority from Chriſt himſelf to try and judge, whether the things they ſpeak be of Chriſt or of themſelves and of Antichriſt. And this Power the faithful People ought not to part with, neither for any Fear, nor for any Favour.

Yea, it moſt nearly concerns the Faithful to try the Spirits, and judge the Doctrines of the Teachers, for theſe two Conſiderations among others. *It concerns the Faithful to try the Spirits, for two Cauſes.*

First. *First*, Becauſe we muſt each one give an Account for ourſelves before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt: Wherefore it concerns every one of us to look to our own eternal Condition, and not to leave this Care to others for us. In Death and Judgment, each one muſt anſwer for himſelf; and therefore we ought to be as certain of the Word of God, on which we build our immortal Souls, as we are ſure we live and are Creatures; we ought, I ſay, to be ſure our ſelves, and not to truſt any Body for us in this great matter, whereon depends either eternal Life, or eternal Death.

Secondly. *Secondly*, It concerns us to try the Spirits and Doctrines, becauſe otherwiſe we may eaſily miſtake, and inſtead of Antichriſt and his Diſciples, daſh againſt Chriſt himſelf & his precious Saints. Yea, we have ſeen how the World and worldly Church, not being able to try the Spirits and Doctrines, have contradicted and crucified the Son of God himſelf, and have reproached and perſecuted all his People who are baptized into one Spirit with him; and doing this, they have thought they have done God good Service too; and all becauſe they were not able to judge of the Spirit and Truth of Chriſt in himſelf and his Members, but have followed the Judgment and Councel of the chief Guides in the outward Church, who have cauſed them to err, and to miſtake Truth for Error, and Error for Truth, Chriſt for Antichriſt, and Antichriſt for Chriſt.

Wherefore it concerns every one to be wiſe to Salvation for himſelf, and to try the Spirits for himſelf, and not to content himſelf to ſay, thus ſaid *Auguſtine*, *Ambroſe*, *Hierom*, &c. or this was the *Judgment* of the *Fathers*, or thus have the

the *Councels* or *Univerſities* determined, or thus do our *Miniſters* teach us; but if thou art one of Chriſt's Flock, thou muſt have Skill to know and judge for thy ſelf which is Chriſt's Spirit and Doctrine, and which is Antichriſts; otherwiſe thou wilt certainly miſcarry in this great matter, and be undone for ever. If thou build on Men in theſe Things, and canſt not judge for thy ſelf, thou wilt be ſure to be undone.

The Clergy have uſurped to themſelves this Power of trying Spirits.

But now this *Power of trying Spirits*, and *judging Doctrines*, which Chriſt hath given his true Flock, and which they ought to have upon ſo good Grounds, the Teachers of the falſe and Antichriſtian Church, that is, the *common Clergy*, diſtinguiſhed by ſeveral Names, Titles, and Degrees, have robbed them of, and have falſly and treacherouſly arrogated to themſelves the Power of trying Spirits, and judging Doctrines, and have ſaid, that it belongs to the *Clergy* or *National Miniſtry*, and their *Councels*, and *Aſſemblies of Divines*, to judge of Spirits, whether they be right or falſe; and to judge of Doctrines, whether they be agreeable to God's Word, or no; and that all Chriſtians ought to expect their Judgment and Determination, and to ſubmit to it, and to depend on it as on an Oracle from Heaven; yea, tho' it be, not only without, but alſo againſt their own particular Judgment.

And theſe Men, I mean the *Clergy*, thro' the Eccleſiaſtical and Temporal Power which they had gotten, have ſtricken great Fear into the whole World, and have miſerably vexed innumerable Conſciences with a grievous and laſting Bondage, and have even driven them to Deſpair, whilſt none durſt approve or own any Spirit or Doctrine,

Doctrine, tho' never so manifestly of Christ and his Gospel, without their Allowance and Approbation; so mightily hath the Power of Antichrist prevailed in the World, and that against the express Word of Christ.

Now the Ground of this their Antichristian Pride and Usurpation, is this, That they arrogate to themselves, that they are the Guides and Shepherds of all Christian Men, and are to teach them the Gospel, which they are only to receive from their Lips; whereas Christ hath promised his true Church, that *they shall be all taught of God, and shall hear and learn themselves from the Father*; and hath also promised to send them the Spirit, to lead them in all Truth, and to give them an Anointing, to teach them all Things.

By this Usurpation the Clergy have made themselves Masters in the Church of God.

Now they by robbing the Faithful of this Power, and arrogating it to themselves, have made themselves contrary to Christ's Command, Lords and Masters in the Church of God, and have usurped to themselves Superiority and Authority over other Believers, and have subjected all the World to their Opinion and Judgment in the things of God; by which Means, they have set wide open the Flood-gates to Antichrist, and his Kingdom, to break in upon the World, and to overflow it, whilst they had robbed all Christian People of their own Judgment in all Things of God, and had made them to depend wholly on the Judgment of the Clergy.

And had not Christian People thus unchristianly delivered up their Judgments to the Clergy, and that in the very highest Points of Religion, Christianity had not been so miserably blinded and corrupted as it is, and the Mystery of Iniquity had not so much prevailed in the World, as now

now it hath. For when Chriſtians would not try the Spirits whether they were of God, and the Doctrines, whether they were the Word of God or no, but thought this a Matter too high for them, and would refer and ſubmit all to the Judgment of their Miniſters; then Antichriſt, the Apoſtle of the Devil, came forth boldly, and proudly exalted himſelf above all that is called God, and his Kingdom, above all the Kingdoms of the World, having firſt put out both the Eyes of Chriſtians, by taking away from them their Right and Power of trying Spirits and judging Doctrines.

But when true Chriſtians ſhall ſearch the Scriptures, as God I truſt hath now fully put into their Hearts to do, and ſhall juſtly and lawfully take to themſelves the Power which God hath given them, to try Spirits and Doctrines, then Antichriſt and his Agents, the carnal Clergy, muſt ſoon be brought down: For the Faithful by that Word ſhall ſoon perceive that they are not of God, nor their Doctrine of that right Goſpel, which is after the Mind of Chriſt.

Well then, by what hath been ſaid, you, who are of Chriſt's true Sheep, may perceive, that it is evident by the Word, that faithful Chriſtians have Right and Power to try Spirits and Doctrines, tho' Antichriſt for many Ages hath robb'd them of this Priviledge.

The Gift of Trying and Diſcerning Spirits, is a common Grace in the true Church.

For, that I may ſpeak a little more to this Matter, the Tryal of Spirits doth unqueſtionably belong to all Men who have received the Spirit of God: For to this Spirit of God which dwells in the Faithful, the Gift of diſcerning Spirits is inſeparably annexed: And the Spirit of Chriſt, which truly dwells in all true Chriſtians, cannot deceive,

deceive, nor be deceived in the Tryal of Spirits. So that this now is a common Grace, that in some measure belongs to all true Christians, who have received the Unction that teacheth them all things, and is true, and is no Lie.

And tho' there be in the Church Diversities of Gifts from the same Spirit, which are given to some, and not to others, as *Tongues* and *Interpretation of Tongues*, and *Miracles*, and *Gifts of Healing*, &c. mention'd by *Paul*, 1 Cor. xii. yet this Gift of Trying Spirits is given to All in some measure, that have received the Spirit. For as in the natural Body, there are several Gifts given to several Members, which are not given to all the Members, as Seeing to the Eye, Hearing to the Ear, Walking to the Foot, *&c.* but Feeling is given to all the Members; so also in the Body of Christ, that is, the spiritual Church, several Gifts are given to several Saints; but the Tryal of Spirits and Doctrines, to Saints who have received the Spirit; and *if any have not Christ's Spirit, he is none of his*; and if any have Christ's Spirit, he can in some measure discern and judge of all Spirits in the World: And the more any Man receives Christ's Spirit, the more able is he to judge of all other Spirits.

Wherefore they who are true Believers, and have received Christ's Spirit, their Judgment is to be preferr'd in the Tryal of Spirits, before the Judgment of a whole Council of Clergy-men.

And they only, who can try Spirits by the Spirit of God, and Doctrines by the Word of God, written in their Hearts by the Spirit, are fit to commend Ministers to the Work of God; that is, the Congregations of the Faithful, and not Universities, and Assemblies of Divines.

And

And thus you may perceive, that seeing many false Prophets are gone out into the World, it concerns the Faithful, as they tender their own everlasting Salvation, not to believe every Spirit that speaks of Christ, and his Kingdom, and his Things, but *to try the Spirits, whether they be of God.*

Object. But now, it may be, some will be ready to say, We ought indeed to try the Spirits, seeing there are many false Prophets in the World; but we hope there are no such Persons among us, but only some up-start Men, with their new Light, who with their Novelties and Fancies trouble the Nation, and would fain turn all things upside down, and we know these well enough already, and do sufficiently despise them. *Objection*

Answ. It is very like you do; but yet let me say to you, Men, Brethren, and Fathers, understand your selves, and know what ye do in this matter. For at the Beginning of the *Reformation* by the Ministry of *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, *Calvin*, and divers others, precious Servants of Jesus Christ, the *Popish* Clergy applied all these Scriptures, *Try the Spirits whether they be of God, for many false Prophets are gone out into the World, and beware of false Prophets, which come to you in Sheeps Clothing, but inwardly are ravening Wolves*; I say, these, and the like Places of Scriptures, they applied to these godly Men, and yet they themselves were the false Prophets indeed; and the other, whom they termed such, were true ones. Wherefore it is possible for you to be mistaken as well as they, and no doubt but you will be mistaken, except the Lord be gracious to you, and give you his own Spirit, by which alone you can make a right Judgment in this matter. *Answer*

Wherefore,

False Prophets not eafily diſcerned.

Wherefore, that he that reads may underſtand, you muſt know, that the falſe Prophets are not ſo eaſily diſcerned as you think; for they ſeem to be true Prophets, and godly, holy, learned, orthodox Men, Men of Eminency and Renown in *Church* and *State:* And ſo to Fleſh and Blood, and the Wiſdom and Religion of the World, it will be a difficult, yea, an impoſſible thing to find them out: For the falſe Prophets have ſeveral glorious Vails over them, to hide and obſcure them from *common Knowledge.*

Becauſe of their ſeveral Vails under which they lie hid.

Wherefore we declare unto you from the Word of the Lord, touching theſe falſe Prophets, who ſhall do ſo much Miſchief.

Firſt

1. That they ſhall not proceed or come forth from among the *Jews* or *Turks*, or out of the barbarous Nations, but they ſhall ariſe out of ſuch as are called Chriſtians.

Secondly

2. Seeing among Chriſtians ſome are openly prophane and evil, others ſeem to be religious and godly; the falſe Prophets ſhall be found among the better Sort; and therefore ſaith Chriſt, *they ſhall come in Sheeps Clothing*, as if they were of Chriſt's own Flock: And *Paul* ſaith, *they have a Form of Godlineſs*, that is, they ſhall be painted over gloriouſly with all Appearances of Truth, Righteouſneſs, Honeſty, Goodneſs, and all the Names of Godlineſs.

Thirdly

3. Seeing amongſt thoſe that ſeem to be the better ſort of Chriſtians, ſome give themſelves to the Miniſtry of the Word, and ſome do not; the falſe Prophets ſhall be found among thoſe Chriſtians who take upon themſelves to be Preachers, as *Paul* teſtifies, *Acts* xx. where having called together the *Elders* and *Teachers* of the *Church* of *Epheſus*, he ſaith to them, *ex vobis ipſis*, *out*

of

of your own ſelves *ſhall Men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away Diſciples after them.*

4. And ſeeing among thoſe who are Miniſters, ſome are light, and vain, and carnal, and formal Perſons, and others are Men of great worth and Reputation, and ſeem to be the precious Members of Chriſt, and even Pillars in the Church, ſo that the common People think that all Religion would go down with ſuch good Men, they having ſome Gifts and Enlightnings of the Spirit, and ſeeming more than ordinarily godly, religious, wiſe, holy, ſober, devout; now the falſe Prophets ſhall be found among theſe. And as they who oppoſed Chriſt at his firſt coming in the Fleſh, ſeemed more wiſe, and holy, and eminent in the Church than the reſt, as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who ſat in *Moſes*'s Chair, and had the outward Letter of the Word in all Exactneſs, and the outward Form of Religion in all Strictneſs; ſo they who do and ſhall moſt oppoſe Chriſt in his coming in his Spirit, and ſhall contradict his Word, and reſiſt his Servants and Witneſſes of his Truth, do, and ſhall appear more wiſe, holy, learned, and godly, than the reſt of the Teachers of the Church. *Fourthly*

And thus you ſee that the falſe Prophets of Antichriſt ſhall ariſe among Chriſtians, and among ſuch Chriſtians as ſeem to be godly; and among ſuch ſeeming godly Chriſtians as preach the Word; and among ſuch Preachers of the Word as ſeem to be of greater Worth and Eminency than the reſt: And ſo in all theſe Regards it will be a hard matter to diſcern them.

2. Again, ſuch Perſons, of ſuch Appearance of Worth and Holineſs as theſe, do uſually get to their Side the greateſt and higheſt Perſons in the *2. Difficulty in trying falſe Prophets.*

the Kingdoms and Nations, and do obtain, not only their Countenance and Favour, but also their Power and Authority for themselves.

3. *Difficulty* 3. By both these means, *to wit*, their seeming Holiness, and their Interest with Worldly Powers, they exceedingly enlarge their Credit and Reputation with the World, and do get Multitudes of People and Nations to entertain them.

For Antichrist could not deceive the World with a Company of foolish, weak, ignorant, prophane, contemptible Persons, but he always hath the greatest, wisest, holiest, and most eminent in the visible Church for him, and by these he seduces and subjects to himself, even the whole World.

4. *Difficulty* Besides, they that are against him and his false Prophets, are but a very handful of Saints, who have the Spirit of Christ, and thro' his Spirit discern them, and oppose them; and for so doing are despised and hated of all the World.

Wherefore it is a harder matter to try these false Prophets than we are well aware of. And yet, as hard as it is, the Apostle, by the Spirit, hath given us a manifest and certain Rule of Trial: And this is the third general Thing I named.

The Third Point.

3. *Point.* To wit, *The sufficient Rule, whereby the true Church may throughly try the Spirits and Prophets, how cunningly and subtilly soever they are disguised*; and this he lays down, verse 3.

The Rule of Tryal.

Hereby know we the Spirit of God; every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is of God: and every one that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is not of God, &c.

Now

Now this *Scripture* we may *underſtand* two Ways. *A two fold underſtanding of this Scripture.*

1. Of a right Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt in his own Perſon.

2. Of a true receiving of this Chriſt into us by Faith.

Firſt, *Of the right Knowledge of Chriſt in his own Perſon.* *1. Of a right Knowledge of Chriſt.*

1. For whereas he ſaith, *Every Spirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh,* &c. This gives us to underſtand, that he is true God, and was before he came into the Fleſh. *1. That true God.*

2. Whereas he ſaith, *Every Spirit that confeſſeth that Chriſt is come in the Fleſh.* This gives us to underſtand, that he is true Man, our very Brother, Partaker of the ſame Fleſh and Blood with us. *2. That true Man.*

3. Whereas he ſaith, *Every Spirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh,* &c. This alſo gives us to underſtand, that in him true God and true Man are united into one inſeparable Perſon. *3. That both are united in him in one Perſon.*

4. Whereas he ſaith, *Every Spirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh,* &c. This gives us Occaſion to conſider the End of his Coming; ſeeing God did not become Man in vain, or for ſome ſlight Cauſe, but that he might redeem unto God all thoſe whom the Father had elected in him, and ſave them perfectly from the Law, Sin, Death and Hell: And hence we may riſe up to conceive of his Offices, to wit, of his Prieſtly, Prophetical and Kingly Office, and of the infinite Virtue and Efficacy of them. *4 The End wherefore this excellent Perſon came into the World: Whence flowes the Knowledge of his Offices.*

Now he that makes his Confeſſion of Jeſus Chriſt from the Revelation of the Father, is of

God; and he that ſpeaks otherwiſe, is not of God.

Of a right Receiving of Chriſt.

But *ſecondly*, We may underſtand this Scripture, not only of the true Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, but alſo and eſpecially of the true Receiving of him by Faith: *Every Spirit*, ſaith he, *that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh, is of God*; that is, he is of God, that believes and acknowledges that the Son of the living God is come, not only into that Humanity of Chriſt that was born of the Virgin, but alſo that he is come into us, and dwells in us; according to theſe Scriptures, *That Chriſt may dwell in your Hearts by Faith*: *And Chriſt in you the Hope of Glory*: *And know ye not that Chriſt is in you, except you be Reprobates*, &c. Wherefore the true Prophets do not only acknowledge that Jeſus Chriſt is come into his own Fleſh, but alſo into theirs, which by this Means is made his; and that Chriſt is in them of a Truth, and dwells in them.

For Antichriſt himſelf, and his Miniſters, do all acknowledge, that Jeſus Chriſt is come into that Fleſh which he did aſſume of the Virgin; but they will not confeſs, that this is true, in him, and in us: They will acknowledge the Myſtery of God manifeſted in the Fleſh, as to Chriſt the Head, but they deny it, as to the Church his Body: And ſo whilſt they ſeparate the Head from the Body, and the Body from the Head in this Myſtery, they do *ſolvere Jeſum*, they diſſolve Jeſus.

I ſay, ſome hold that the eternal Word, or divine Nature, came indeed into that Fleſh which was born of the bleſſed Virgin, but they will by no Means allow it to come into ours, through our Union with him by Faith: Only they

they ſay, Some created Habits, or Gifts of Grace come into us, or in our Fleſh, but not Chriſt himſelf, or the divine Nature, or Son of the living God. And ſo theſe Men ſet up theſe created Gifts and Graces in the Members inſtead of Chriſt himſelf the Head.

And yet theſe Teachers make a glorious Shew in the Fleſh; and this is Antichriſt; to wit, when Men think that theſe created Habits of Grace, which they fancy will renew, comfort, ſanctify and ſave them; and ſo do make to themſelves of them, a glorious, but yet a falſe Chriſt.

Wherefore let us know, that he that denies Jeſus Chriſt in the Members, is, though not ſo great, yet as true Antichriſt as he that denies Jeſus Chriſt in the Head: And he that denies Chriſt dwelling in our Hearts by Faith, to be, and to be alone, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification and Redemption to us, as he that denies him to be the Power, Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs of God in himſelf.

The Sum of this Matter is this, That the true Spirits or Prophets do acknowledge, not only that Chriſt the Son of the living God is come into that Son of Man which was born of the bleſſed Virgin, but alſo, that Chriſt is come into them, and dwells in them, as in his own true and proper Members.

And ſo he that hath Jeſus Chriſt dwelling in his Heart, is a true Prophet; and he that hath not Chriſt dwelling in his Heart, is a falſe Prophet, tho' his Knowledge and Religion be never ſo high, and glorious, and holy alſo in the Opinion of the World. And this is the chief Sign and Mark whereby we may know the true Pro-

phets and true Chriſtians, from the falſe Prophets and falſe Chriſtians.

Objection, *Object.* Now if any ſhall ſay, But how ſhall we know whether a Man hath Chriſt dwelling in his Heart or no; and ſo conſequently, whether he be a true or falſe Prophet?

Anſwer. *Anſw.* I anſwer, You ſhall certainly know it by the Truth of the Word of Chriſt in him, and by the Truth of the Life of Chriſt, in reference to his Office in the Word.

Signs where by the true Prophets are diſcerned from the falſe. *First* then, The true Prophets are to be diſcerned from the Falſe,

By the Truth of the Word of God in them.

The true Prophets ſpeak the true Word of God. For the true Prophets ſpeak the true Word of God, even the Word of Wiſdom, the Word of Righteouſneſs, the Word of Life, the Word of Power, the Word that is able to ſave, which is the true goſpel Word. For this is the Covenant that God hath made with Chriſt and his Seed, ſaying, *Iſa* lix. 21. *My Spirit which is upon thee, and my Word which is in thy Mouth, ſhall never depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed's Seed, from henceforth and for ever.*

Thus in Chriſt, And this was perfectly fulfilled in Chriſt; for that Word, which in the Beginning was with God, and was God, was made Fleſh in him, and dwelt in him; and out of that Word Jeſus Chriſt ſpake all that ever he ſpake; his whole Doctrine did flow from the eternal Word which dwelt in him.

And his Diſciples. And Chriſt communicated to the Diſciples the ſame Word which he had received, as he ſaith, *John* xvii. 8. *I have given to them the Words*

that thou gaveſt me, that is, the Word of Righteouſneſs and Life, *and they have received them, and have known ſurely, that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me*; and ſo that Word, which they themſelves received by Faith, they alſo held forth to others, as *John* ſaith, 1 *John* i. 1 *That which was from the Beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our Eyes, which we have looked upon, and our Hands have handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you.*

And to this alſo *John* the Baptiſt gives Teſtimony, *John* iii. 34. where he ſaith, *He whom God hath ſent ſpeaketh the Words of God*, not the Words of Men or Angels, but of God; and this is true, both in Chriſt and in his Seed.

The falſe Prophets ſpeak not the Word of God, but their own or other Mens Words.

But now the *falſe Prophets* ſpeak not the Word of God, for they have it not in their Hearts; but what Word they have in their Heart, that they ſpeak; and ſo they ſpeak the Words of their own Reaſon, Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs, or of other Mens; but beyond human Things they do not go, whether they pretend to high Notions on the one hand, or to ſound orthodox Doctrine on the other Hand.

Now of this, true Chriſtians are to take ſpecial Notice; becauſe as the true Word of God is the greateſt Commodity to the Church that can be, and brings the Preſence of Chriſt, and all the Things of Chriſt along with it; ſo the Word of Man is the greateſt Miſchief to the Church that can be; for it brings Antichriſt, and his Kingdom, and all his Things along with it. And thus doth vain Philoſophy, and ſchool Divinity, which is an unlawful Mixing of Philoſophy with the outward Letter of the Word, pervert all

things in the Church of carnal and false Christians.

2 They speak it by the true Spirit of God.

2. As the true Prophets speak the true Word of God, so also they speak it by the true Spirit of God, and not by their own Spirit: And thus did Christ, who saith of himself, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel*; and so he spake the Word of God by the Spirit of God.

And Christ commanded his Disciples to stay at *Jerusalem* till they had received the Spirit, and then to go forth and preach; because he knew they could not preach God's Word aright without God's Spirit; and also Christ saith of all the Faithful, *That it is not they that speak, but the Spirit of their Father that speaks in them*; yea, and the whole *Gospel* is called the *Ministration of the Spirit*.

And so in the right Sense of it.

Now the true Prophets, speaking the Word of God by and in his Spirit, do also speak it in the right Sense, and after the true Mind of Christ, as *Paul* saith of himself, and of other Believers who had received the Spirit, *We have the Mind of Christ*.

The false speak without the Spirit.

But the false Prophets, though they speak the Word of the Letter exactly, and that accordingly to the very Original, and Curiosity of Criticisms, yet speaking it without the Spirit, they are false Prophets before God and his true Church; seeing all right Prophesie hath proceeded from the Spirit in all Ages of the World, but especially it must so proceed in the Days of the *New Testament* wherein God hath promised the largest Effusion of his Spirit.

And so do mistake the Mind of Christ.

And they speaking the Word of the Letter without the Spirit, do wholly mistake the Mind of Christ in all, and under the outward Letter of the Word of God, do only bring in the Mind of Man.

Man. And this is one of the greateſt Deluſions, and moſt miſchievous Snares that can be laid in the Church, to bring in the Word of Chriſt without the Mind of Chriſt; yea, to bring in the Word of Chriſt, againſt the Mind of Chriſt, and according to the Mind of Antichriſt: This is the effectual Operation of Error, whereby all Hypocrites and falſe Chriſtians are deceived, and that without all Hope of Recovery.

And thus you ſee, that the true Prophets bring the true Word, and bring it alſo by the true Spirit, and this manifeſts them to be of God: But the falſe either bring not the true Word, or if they bring the Word in the Letter, yet they bring it without the Spirit, and thus it is manifeſt they are not of God.

Objection. *Whether a Man deſtitute of the Spirit, may not be a profitable Preacher*

Object. But ſome will object here: If a Man preach the Word in the Letter, even good, ſound and orthodox Doctrine, no doubt but ſuch a Man is to be heard, and he may do much Good in the Church, tho' he wants Chriſt's Spirit: This I have heard from very many, who have thought they have ſaid ſomething.

Anſwer.

Anſw. But to this I anſwer: That they who want Chriſt's Spirit, which is the Spirit of Propheſie, tho' they preach the exact Letter of the Word, yet are falſe Prophets and not to be heard by the Sheep.

1. Becauſe under the New Teſtament, we are not to regard the Letter without the Spirit, but the Spirit as well as the Letter, yea, the Spirit more than the Letter; and therefore *Paul* ſaith, *that Chriſt ſhall deſtroy Antichriſt with the Spirit of his Mouth, and the Brightneſs of his Coming*: He ſcarce takes any Notice of the Letter, but calls the true Preaching of the Goſpel, *The Spirit of*

Chriſt's Mouth, or *the Miniſtration of the Spirit.* And therefore the ſpiritual People cannot joyn to that Miniſtry where the Spirit of Chriſt is wanting, tho' there be the outward Letter of the Word in it.

2. They that preach only the outward Letter of the Word without the true Spirit, they make all things Outward in the Church, and ſo carry the People, with whom they prevail, only to outward Things, to an outward Word, to outward Worſhip, outward Ordinances, outward Church, outward Government, *&c.* Whereas in the true Kingdom of Chriſt all things are Inward and Spiritual, and all the true Religion of Chriſt is written in the Soul and Spirit of Man, by the Spirit of God; and the Believer is the only Book in which God himſelf writes his *New Teſtament.*

3. They who preach the outward Letter of the Word, though never ſo truly, without the Spirit, do, as hath been ſaid, wholly miſtake the Mind of Chriſt in the Word for want of the Spirit, which is the only true and infallible Interpreter of his Mind; and ſo under the outward Letter of the Word, preach their own Mind, and not Chriſt's Mind, and do make all the Scriptures ſerve their own Turns, even their own worldly Ends and Advantages, and nothing elſe.

4. They that preach the outward Letter of the Word without the Spirit, can with ſuch a Word both live themſelves in all the inward Evils of corrupted Nature, and allow others to do ſo too. And thus the Goſpel, which in the Spirit of it, is the Judgment of Sin, is made in the Letter of it the Covering for Sin, and the Encourager of it; ſeeing ſuch Men, who have the

Lettter

Letter of the Word in their Mouths, do live in the inward Corruptions of their Hearts more ſecurely and quietly than other Men.

5. Laſt of all, let us know that whoever doth agree with Chriſt never ſo exactly in the Letter, and yet differs from him in Spirit, is a very Antichriſt. And therefore when the Devils in him that was poſſeſſed ſaid to Chriſt, *We know thee who thou art, the holy One of God*, and ſo agreed very exactly with the Goſpel in the Letter, yet Chriſt forbad them to ſpeak, becauſe they ſpake not by a right Spirit. And Chriſt hath ſaid, *Whoever is not with me*, that is, in the Spirit, *is againſt me*, tho' he have the ſame outward Letter of the Word with him.

And ſo as Chriſt builds up his Church by his Spirit through his Word; ſo Antichriſt builds up his Church by the Word without the Spirit: And Chriſt's Church and Antichriſts do often differ very little or nothing in Word or Letter, yet do always infinitely differ in Spirit.

Wherefore to conclude, let us know, that that Church that hath the Word, if it wants the Spirit, is Antichriſt's Church; and that that Miniſtry that uſeth the Word and wants the Spirit, is Antichriſt's Miniſtry; and that all Works, Duties, Prayings, Preaching, Faſting, Thankſgiving, *&c.* without Chriſt's Spirit, are nothing but the very Kingdom of Antichriſt, and the Abomination of Diſolation.

The Second general Rule of the Tryal of Spirits.

And ſo I proceed to the *Second* general Rule of Tryal, which I propounded, whereby we may diſcern the true Prophets of Chriſt from the falſe Prophets of Antichriſt, and that is:

By

By the Truth of the Life of Christ in reference to his Office in the Word.

The true Prophets are known by the Truth of the Life of Christ.

And here I shall give you many Tryals, how you may certainly know and discern the false Prophets of Antichrist from the true, humble and faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ.

And the Lord Jesus Christ, before whom we are all present this Day, and before whose Tribunal we shall all be judged, he knows that I shall not purposely speak any thing at this Time, either to please myself or to displease you; but I shall desire to speak all out of very Faithfulness to him, who hath remembred me when I was in low Condition, for his Mercy endureth for ever.

1. Sign,

The first Sign then whereby the true Prophets may be discerned from the false, is this:

The true Prophets sent of Christ.

First, The true Prophets are all sent of God. So was *Moses* whom God sent to the Children of *Israel*, and bid him tell them, *That I AM, even the God of* Abraham, Isaac *and* Jacob, *hath sent him to them*; and he gave him a proportionable Measure of his Presence to cause them to believe it. And Christ, a greater Prophet than *Moses*, even the Head of all the Children of God, said by *Isaiah* xlviii. 16. *Come ye near unto me, hear ye this, I have not spoken in Secret from the Beginning, and now the Lord and his Spirit hath sent me.* And every where in the Gospel, he still declares, *How he came not of himself, but his Father sent him.*

And as the Father sent Christ, so Christ sends all his Seed, the true Ministers of the Gospel, as is manifest, *John* xx. 21. where Christ said to his Disciples, *As my Father sent me, so send I you*; which

which he ſpake not only touching them, but touching all that ſhould believe in his Name thro' their Word; and *Paul* alſo ſaith, *Rom.* x. 15. *How ſhall they teach except they be ſent?* So that true Preaching comes from true Sending, and this comes from the Grace of God.

God hath not commited the choice of his Miniſters to any ſort of Men.

Now I deſire you farther to take notice, that God hath reckoned the Choice of his Miniſters one of the weightieſt Things that belong unto his Kingdom; wherefore he would never commit the Truſt of this to any Sort of Men whatſoever. Yea, Chriſt himſelf did not chooſe his Diſciples at his own human Will, but only at the Will of God, and therefore was much in Prayer before he choſe them.

And the Apoſtles themſelves durſt not of themſelves, when they were all met together, chooſe any one into the Room of *Judas*, but they betook themſelves to Prayer, and deſired the Lord to ſhew whom he had choſen. And Acts xiii. The Spirit ſaid, *Seperate me* Barnabas *and* Saul *for the Work whereunto I have called them.* And *Paul* tells the *Galatians*, *That he was an Apoſtle, not of Men, nor by Men, but by Jeſus Chriſt and God the Father.*

By all which Scriptures we may perceive what Care the Lord hath always had to ſend his own Miniſters himſelf into his own Church, and would have his true Church receive no Miniſters but ſuch as he ſends them.

He ſends them himſelf.

And the great and chief Sending into the Church, is from God himſelf, as we ſee in *Moſes*, and all the Prophets, and in Chriſt himſelf the Head of them, and in all the Apoſtles, and in all Believers.

Now

The proof of his sending them.

Now the Proof of a Man's sending from God is this, to be anointed with the Spirit; as *John* xx. 22. When Christ said to his Disciples, *As my Father sent me, so send I you*, he breathed upon them, and said, *Receive the holy Spirit*: For his Father sent him only by pouring out his Spirit on him; and he sends them so only; and he that ☞ saith, *The Unction of the Spirit alone is not sufficient for the Ministry of the New Testament*, he denies Christ and his Apostles to have been sufficient Ministers, and he perverts the Scripture, and seduces the People.

Now the true Teachers, through the pouring forth of the Spirit on them, they do truly know Christ himself, and the great Mystery of the Gospel, and all the Things that are freely given us of God; and they are also filled with Love to their Brethren, and are enabled to confess the Truth, and to do thereafter, and to contemn the World, and patiently to suffer Rebukes, *&c.* All which is a sufficient Proof of any ones sending from God.

And thus the true Prophets are all sent of God, which is their great Comfort and Support in all Trouble and Difficulties, because he that sends them, is still with them. *Lo*, saith Christ, *I am with you always, to the End of the World.*

The false Prophets run without sending.

But now on the contrary, the false Prophets and Ministers of Antichrist are not sent of God, but are sent and appointed by Men, and that thro' their own Desire and seeking. And of such the Lord complains, *Jer.* xxiii. 21. *I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied: But because I sent them not, neither commanded them, they shall not profit this People at all, saith the Lord.* vers. 32.

And

And Chriſt ſaid, *Many falſe Chriſts and falſe Prophets ſhall ariſe*, i. e. are not ſent of God, but ſhall ariſe of themſelves. And *Paul* ſaith to the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*, Acts xx. *Out of yourſelves ſhall Men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe Things, to draw Diſciples after them.* They ariſe of themſelves, they are not ſent of God.

Now ſuch Teachers as theſe do uſually ſpring up in the Church thro' academical Degrees, and eccleſiaſtical Ordination; which two things have poured forth into the Church whole Swarms of falſe Prophets and antichriſtian Miniſters, never ſent of God nor anointed of his Spirit, to the irreparable Damage, Prejudice and Ruin of the People and Nations who have received them, with their falſe and poyſonous Doctrine.

Wherefore all thoſe Teachers who are not ſent of the Lord and his Spirit, but ariſe of themſelves, and come into the Church in the Strength and Might of their Degrees and Orders, they are all falſe Prophets.

The Second Sign.

The true Prophets, who are ſent of God take all their Warrant and Authority from God, for what they teach, and do not at all regard Men or build on them. And this hath all along made the true Teachers ſo bold, and ſo confident in the Name of God, againſt the World and worldly Church: So *Iſaiah* l. 4, &c. ſaith, *The Lord God hath given me the Tongue of the Learned, that I ſhould know how to ſpeak a Word in due Seaſon to him that is weary; he wakeneth morning by morning; he wakeneth my Ear to hear as the Learned. The Lord hath opened mine Ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.*

True Prophets take all their Warrant from God in what they teach. The learned i. e. *they who are taught of God, and have heard and learned of the Father, who are the learndeſt Men in the World, whatever the fooliſh & ignorant World ſaith to the contrary.*

For

For the Lord God will help me, therefore ſhall I not be confounded; therefore have I ſet my Face as a Flint, and I know I ſhall not be aſhamed.

He is near that juſtifies me; who will contend with me? Let us ſtand together, who is mine Adverſary? Let him come near me.

Behold the Lord will help me; who is he that ſhall condemn me? Lo they all ſhall wax old as a Garment, the Moth ſhall eat them up. See here the admirable Confidence of a Teacher ſent from God.

And ſo alſo our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the Days of his Fleſh, how bold was he in his Miniſtry, coming in the Name of the Lord, and having his Authority and Doctrine from him! How boldly did he reprove the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, the chief Teachers of the *Jewiſh* Church! And what a clear and glorious Confeſſion of the Truth of God did he hold forth againſt all their Oppoſition and Contradiction?

And the Apoſtles, when the Rulers, Elders, and Scribes, and *Annas* the high Prieſt, and *Caiaphas*, and *John*, and *Alexander*, and all the Kindred of the high Prieſt were gathered together, and threatned them, and ſtraitly charged them to preach no more in that Name, they anſwered, *Whether it be right in the Sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but ſpeak the Things which we have ſeen and heard*, Acts iv. 19.

And ſo *Wickliff*, *John Hus*, and *Luther*, who were ſent of God, did take all their Authority from God alone, and ſo were bold and confident each of them in their Time, againſt the whole World.

But now the falſe Prophets, who come of themſelves

ſelves, and by the ſending of Men, they do all by the Authority and Warrant of Man; and accordingly do joyn themſelves together, by ſecular Power, to bring about their Doctrines and Deſigns in the Church; and from the civil Authority they procure Leave and Power to publiſh their Doctrine, and ſet up their Diſcipline in the Church, and to ſuppreſs whatever is contrary thereto; and without this worldly Licenſe and Authority, they neither can nor dare do any thing: And are never bold, but when the Authority of Man is for them. But the true Prophets, as hath been ſaid, do only take their Authority from Chriſt for what they teach, and are bold in his Name only, to hold it forth: And ſo after they have publiſh'd the Word in Faith, in the ſame Faith they leave the Maintenance and Defending of it to him alone, whoſe Word it is; and they neither publiſh it for Man's commanding, nor ſmother it for Man's forbidding.

False Teachers take all their Authority from Man.

Wherefore thoſe Teachers, who have not their Warrant from Chriſt for their Doctrine, and are not bold in his Name alone, but do derive all their Authority and Encouragement from Men, to ſpeak and act in the Things of God, they are all falſe Prophets, and Miniſters of Antichriſt.

The Third Sign.

The true and faithful Teachers, as they are ſent of God, and take their Authority from God, ſo in all their Doctrine, they only hold forth Jeſus Chriſt. And this they have learned from God himſelf.

True Prophets, they only preach Jeſus Chriſt

For the Father ſpeaking immediately from Heaven, preached nothing but Chriſt, ſaying,

This

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him: And this he ſpake thrice from the excellent Glory; manifeſting, that he himſelf had no higher Thing, nor no other Thing to declare to the World, than his Son Jeſus Chriſt, in whom alone are hid all the Treaſures of all true and ſpiritual Wiſdom and Knowledge.

The Son alſo in all his Miniſtry only declared who himſelf was, whom the Father had given to the elect Church, ſaying, *I will publiſh the Decree, whereof the Lord hath ſaid unto me, Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*: And in all his Miniſtry only declared who he was, and to what End his Father had given him, ſaying, *I am the Bread of Life, which cometh down from Heaven; he that cometh to me ſhall never hunger; and he that believeth in me ſhall never thirſt*: And *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no Man cometh to the Father but by me.* And all his Doctrine and Works were to this End, that we might believe that *Jeſus is the Son of God*, and that believing in him, we might have eternal Life.

Pſal. ii.

Non dixit Chriſtus ſuo primo Cætui, Ite & prædicate mundo Nugas; ſed verum illis dedit Fundamentum: & illud tantum ſonuit in ore Ipſorum *Dantes*

The Apoſtles alſo of the Lord, after they had received the Spirit, did go up and down the World only preaching Jeſus, and Repentance, and Remiſſion of Sins in his Name.

And *Paul*, a laborious Preacher, through the Grace of God, did renounce and reject all his worldly Learning, and all his human Accompliſhments and Excellencies in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, and preached nothing but the right Knowledge of Chriſt, and right Faith in him, as he himſelf teſtifies, *Phil.* iii. 7, *&c.* ſaying, *What things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt; yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs for the Excellency*

Excellency of the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord, for whom I have ſuffered the Loſs of all Things, and do count them but Dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having my own Righteouſneſs, which is of the Law, but that which is thro' the Faith of Chriſt, the Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith; that I may know him, and the Power of his Reſurrection, and the Fellowſhip of his Sufferings, and be made conformable to him in his Death, if by any Means I might attain to the Reſurrection from the Dead.

And he alſo tells the *Corinthians*, that he deſired to *know nothing amongſt them, but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.*

And thus the true Teachers preach nothing but Chriſt, and him they preach, not according to their own human Conceptions and Apprehenſions, but according to the Revelation they have received from the Father by the Spirit.

The falſe preach nothing leſs than Chriſt.

But on the contrary, the falſe Teachers preach nothing leſs than Chriſt, and Faith in him: But they chiefly teach the Law, and moral Doctrine, and Works, or elſe Philoſophy, and philoſophical Subtilties and Speculations, which yet the Apoſtle hath expreſly forbidden, *Col.* ii. 8. ſaying to the Faithful, *Beware leſt any Man ſpoil you thro' Philoſophy and vain Deceit, after the Traditions of Men, after the Elements of the World, and not after Chriſt; for in him dwells the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily; and ye are compleat in him, who is the Head of all Principality and Power*: And ſo we need not turn from Chriſt to Philoſophy, that vain Deceit.

Wherefore they who preach not the Myſtery of Chriſt, through the Revelation of the Father,

and the Spirit, but moral Virtues and vain Philoſophy, inſtead of Chriſt, are all of them falſe Prophets, and Miniſters of Antichriſt.

The Fourth Sign.

The true Prophets preach Chriſt for Love, and not for Gain,

The true Miniſters and Prophets of Chriſt, as they only hold forth Chriſt, ſo they hold him forth only for the Love of God, and their Brother, and not for any worldly Profit or Gain.

Thus Chriſt taught his Diſciples, out of the Love of God, as he ſaith, *I delight to do thy Will, O my God, yea, thy Law is within my Heart*, that is, his Love to God. And alſo out of Love to his Brother; for having loved his own, he loved them to the End; and out of this Love taught them; as he ſaith, *I have called you Friends; for whatſoever I have heard from my Father, I have declared unto you.*

And as he taught out of Love himſelf, ſo he hath commanded all his Seed to teach one another out of the ſame Love, and hath given them his Spirit, which is Love, that thereby they might love both him and their Brethren; and therefore Chriſt, knowing how difficult a Work it was, to feed his Sheep with the right and ſound Doctrine of the Goſpel; and that none could or would perform this, except they loved Chriſt from their very Heart-Root, ſaid thrice to *Peter, Peter, doſt thou love me? Doſt thou love me? Doſt thou love me? Then feed my Sheep, my Lambs, my Sheep*: And *Paul* ſaith, *The Love of Chriſt conſtrained him to teach the Goſpel.* And the Fruit of the Spirit, in all Believers, being Love; in this brotherly Love they ſerve one another in the Goſpel.

And

And as Chriſt himſelf did not ſell his ſpiritual Travel to his Church for worldly Profit or Gain; no more do his true Seed and Servants; for ſaith *Paul*, Acts xx. 33. *I have coveted no Man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel; yea yourſelves know, that theſe Hands have miniſtred to my Neceſſity, and to them who were with me:* And 2 *Cor.* xii. 14. *Behold the third Time I am ready to come to you, I will not be burthenſome to you, for I ſeek not yours but you;* And *v.* 17. *Did I make a Gain of you, by any of them whom I ſent unto you? Or did* Titus *make a Gain of you? Walked we not both in the ſame Spirit?*

And thus the true Teachers do not ſeek any temporal Gain or Commodity from the Hands of Men by their preaching, but do truly and chearfully teach out of the Love of Chriſt, and their Brother.

The falſe preach for Gain, and not for Love of Chriſt.

But on the contrary, the falſe Teachers, tho' they do not teach the Goſpel, being deſtitute of the Spirit, but vain Philoſophy and human Doctrines inſtead of it, yet will they live by the Goſpel, and not by the Labour of their Hands, in a lawful Calling; they will have the temporal Goods of the Church, and yet not miniſter the ſpiritual Treaſure of it; and what they do miniſter they do it for Reward, as it is written, *Micah* iii 11. *The Prieſts teach for Hire, and the Prophets divine for Money; and he that puteth not into their Mouths, they even prepare War againſt him.*

And to ſhew they preach for the Love of Gain, they are brought up to the Miniſtry as to a Trade to live by; and they run in this Way, from one Place to another, from a leſſer to a greater Living, and where they may gain moſt of this World, there will they be ſure to be: Yea, ſo much

much are they addicted to their worldly Advantage, that they had rather Christ's Kingdom should never be set up in the World, nor Antichrist's never be thrown down, than suffer any Loss or Diminution in their Profit, Power, Dignity, Authority, or in any worldly Thing, whereof they have got the Possession and Injoyment.

Wherefore they that teach Christ, not for the Love of Christ, and their Brother, but for temporal Gain, and worldly Advantage only, are all of them false Teachers, and Ministers of Antichrist.

The Fifth Sign.

The true Prophets teach for the Glory of Christ, and not for vain Glory.

The true Teachers teach Christ to others as they have been taught him of God, only for the *Glory* of *God*, and not out of Vain-glory. Wherefore Christ said of himself, *John.* viii. 50. *I seek not mine own Glory.* And *John* vii. 18. *He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own Glory; but he that seeketh the Glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no Unrighteousness is in him*: So that whoever speaketh from God, seeketh God's Glory: And so also *Paul* saith, 1 *Thes.* ii. 6. *Nor of Men sought we Glory, neither of you, nor yet of others.*

So that true Teachers do not preach the Word to win to themselves Glory in the World, and Praise, and Applause from Men; but do rather seek the Glory of God by their Doctrine, tho' Hypocrites and carnal People for this Cause do deride and scorn them.

The false speak their own Glory, neglecting Christ.

But on the contrary, the false Teachers seek above all things their own Glory by the Ministry, and to this End,

1. They get to themselves Titles and Degrees

grees in the *Univerſity*, for their pretended Knowledge in Divinity above other Chriſtians; and and by theſe Degrees they get the uppermoſt Seats in the Synagogues, and Greetings in the Markets, and are called of Men, Doctor, Doctor, which Chriſt hath expreſly forbidden in his Goſpel.

2. Having got ſuch Titles, they go forth in their own Name as Men of approved Religion, Learning, Reputation and Worth, and for ſuch they make Account the World ſhould receive them.

3. They eſpecially deſire to preach to rich Men, and great Men, and Men in Place and Authority, that from them they may have Protection, Favour, Preferment, and a quiet Life, and care not much to preach to the poor, plain, mean People, by whom they can expect no worldly Advantage.

4. To this End alſo, they ſpeak in the Words which Man's Wiſdom teacheth, and ſo mingle Philoſophy with Divinity, and think to credit the Goſpel with Terms of Art, and do ſprinkle their Sermons with Hebrew, Greek, Latin, as with a Perfume acceptable to the Noſtrils of the World.

In a Word, they preach all things in a pleaſing Spirit to the World, that they by all may get Glory to themſelves, and may be accounted, with *Simon Magus*, ſome great Ones; And in all this they ſhew they ſpeak of themſelves, and not of God; ſeeing they ſeek not God's Glory, but their own; for *he that ſpeaketh of himſelf ſeeketh his own Glory.*

Wherefore they who by their Miniſtry do not ſeek the Glory of God alone, and of his Son Jeſus

Christ, but seek their own Glory, and the Praise of Men, as the Clergy generally do, and not least of all in this Place, they are all of them false Prophets, and Ministers of Antichrist.

The Sixth Sign.

The true Prophets endure Reproaches and Persecutions with Meekness.

The true Preachers and Ministers of Christ, when they are Opposed, Resisted, Slandered and Persecuted for the Worlds Sake, they endure it with all Meekness, Humility and Patience. Thus Christ endured all the Reproaches, Contradictions, Revilings and Persecutions from the *Jews*; and *when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*, 1 Pet. ii. 23. And *Paul* saith of himself to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. xii. 12. *You had the Signs of my Apostleship in all Patience.*

The false are angry against the Reproofs of the Word.

But on the contrary, the false Teachers, when any Truth is preached that they know not, or that is against their Gain or Glory, they snarl and bark at it, and bite them that bring it. And therefore saith *Paul, Beware of Dogs*, Phil iii. 2, not Dogs by Nature, but by Practice and Condition. Now a curst Dog lying on a rich Garment, or soft Carpet, at his ease, as long as he may lie still he is very quiet, but if you would remove him from his Place, he soon snarls and flies at you, and shews of what Mettle he his made. So the false Teachers, who have gotten a carnal Knowledge of the Word, and have thereby goten Preferment and great Advantages in the World, they lie quiet on these soft Things, as long as they may lie still; but if any seek by the Word of God to rouze them up from these Things, they

rise

riſe up like angry Dogs, and bark at them, and rend them, as much as they can or dare.

Wherefore thoſe Teachers who cannot patiently ſuffer Wrongs for the Word's Sake, but on the contrary, when they are reproved by the Word, and their Sheeps Cloathing pull'd off, even their falſe Vizard of Religion, do preſently grow impatient and furious; and they that bark and foam againſt the late revealed Truth, which toucheth them very near, they are all falſe Teachers and Miniſters of Antichriſt.

The Seventh Sign.

The true Prophets and Miniſters of Chriſt do not force any Body to hear them, and obey their Doctrine againſt their Wills, neither do they vex and trouble them with ſecular Power, who will not obey them, and be ſubject to them; but they leave all ſuch People as they found them, leſt they ſhould ſeem by their Doctrine to ſeek any worldly Thing.

The true Prophets force no body to hear them againſt their Wills.

Thus Chriſt when he taught the Goſpel ſtill cryed out, *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear*; and he that had not Ears to hear, he did not puniſh him: And again ſaith Chriſt, *If any Man will be my Diſciple, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me*; and ſtill left Men to their own Freedom, whether they would be his Diſciples or no.

And as Chriſt did thus himſelf, ſo he left the ſame Thing in command with all his true Diſciples; and when he ſent them forth to preach, *Matt.* x. he charged them ſaying, *Whoever will not receive you, nor hear your Words, when you depart out of that Houſe or City, ſhake off the Duſt of your Feet, as a Teſtimony againſt them*; He doth

not bid them if they be refuſed, to betake themſelves to the ſecular Power, to get Authority from thence to ſtay and abide there, whether they will or no, or otherwiſe to puniſh them, but bids them only to *ſhake off the Duſt of their Feet*, that they might know they came not to them for the Love of earthly Things. And when the Apoſtles, out of a falſe zeal, would have had Chriſt to have commanded Fire to have come down from Heaven to have deſtroyed them that would not receive him; he plainly reproved them ſaying, *Ye know not of what Spirit ye are; for the Son of Man is not come to deſtroy Mens Lives, but to ſave them.*

It is recorded in the Life of *Simon* and *Jude* the Apoſtles, as both *Gulielmus de ſancto Amore*, and *John Hus* relate, *That when the chief Ruler was very angry with thoſe who defamed the Doctrine of thoſe Apoſtles, and in great Zeal commanded a great Fire to be made, that ſuch Oppoſers might be caſt into it, the Apoſtles fell down before the Emperor, ſaying*, We beſeech you, Sir, let not us be the Authors or Cauſers of this Deſtruction, who are come to publiſh the Doctrine of eternal Salvation; neither let us who are ſent to revive thoſe who are dead thro' Sin, become the Killers of thoſe who are alive.

The falſe force Men by the Power of the Magiſtrate.

Wherefore thoſe Teachers, who for worldly Advantage ſake, will force themſelves upon thoſe Men againſt their Wills, who will not willingly receive them; and will provoke the worldly Powers and Magiſtrates to puniſh thoſe who will not hear and receive them and their Doctrine, they are all falſe Prophets and Miniſters of Antichriſt.

The

The Eighth Sign.

The true Teachers are content that others ſhould teach as well as they, and would not make a Monopoly of the Miniſtry to themſelves alone, for worldly Advantage Sake.

The true Prophets are content that others ſhould teach aswell as they.

Thus our Lord Jeſus Chriſt did not content himſelf to preach the Goſpel alone, but he ſent forth others, as his Father ſent forth him, yea, he pours forth his Spirit on all Fleſh, that Sons and Daughters, and Servants, and Handmaids may propheſie, and ſo *Knowledge may cover the Earth, as Waters the Seas*: And to make the World willing to receive ſuch Teachers, he ſaith, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.*

And when *Eldad* and *Medad*, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord did reſt, did propheſie in the Camp of *Iſrael*, without aſking any Licence from *Moſes*, and one told *Moſes* of it in great Diſpleaſure, and *Joſhua* thereupon wiſhed *Moſes* to forbid them to propheſie, then *Moſes* the meek Servant of the Lord replied, *Envieſt thou for my Sake, would God*, ſaith he, *that all the Lord's People were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them all*, Numb. xi. 29. And ſo the godly Mind of any faithful Teacher deſireth to be helped in the Work of the Word, that the precious Truth of the Goſpel, which he himſelf alone cannot ſufficiently expreſs, all Mens Tongues might declare. And ſo they do not envy in others thoſe ſpiritual Gifts which God hath given them, but do wiſh, that every Man had a Mouth and Wiſdom given him to declare the Myſtery of the Goſpel, and the infinite Love, Mercy, Wiſdom, Truth, Power, Redemption, and Salvation of God by Jeſus Chriſt, which cannot by all Mens Tongues

Tongues be sufficiently published in the World.

Farther, as no worldly Prince or Magistrate hath such an unlimited Power over the Goods of the People, as to forbid them to give corporal Alms to them that stand in need, as Occasion is ministred; no more hath any Power, whether *Ecclesiastical* or *Civil*, such Dominion over the Word and Truth of God written by the Spirit in the Hearts of Believers, but that they may at all Times, and upon all Occasions, minister spiritual Alms to them who stand in need, by the Teaching of the Gospel.

The false would have none to teach but themselves, and their own Tribe, lest their Gain should be prejudiced.

Wherefore those Teachers, who are envious that any should preach the Word but themselves, and their own Tribe, as they call it, because they get great worldly Advantage thereby, whereas otherwise they would be contented that any should preach, and so would have the civil Magistrate only to licence them to be Preachers, because of their Degrees and Orders, and to forbid all others, they are all false Teachers and Ministers of Antichrist.

The Ninth Sign.

The true Prophets are willing to suffer for the Truth they preach.

The true Teachers do not only teach the Word, but are also ready to seal to the Truth of it, with their Estates, Liberties and Lives.

Thus did Jesus Christ, as was foretold by *Isaiah*, Chap. l. 6. where Christ saith by his Spirit, *The Lord hath opened mine Ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back; I gave my Back to the Smiters, and my Cheeks to them who plucked off the Hair; I hid not my Face from Shame and Spitting.* And in the Days of his Flesh, how willingly did he seal to the Truth of his New-Testament Doctrine with his Suffering, and suffered himself

himself to be apprehended by the Hands of Men, and to be crucified, when he could have commanded Legions of Angels for his Succour, if he had pleased, and would not have made Use of his own infinite and almighty Power.

And this Submission and willingness to suffer for the Truth, Christ hath commanded all his Disciples, saying, *He that will save his Life, shall lose it; and he that will lose his Life for my Sake shall save it:* And *if any Man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, take up the Cross and follow me:* And again, *I send ye forth as Sheep among Wolves, and ye shall be brought before Kings and Rulers for my Names-sake,* that is, for the true and spiritual Teaching of the Gospel.

Now as nothing will procure us more Enmity, than the Spiritual holding forth of the Gospel, which will cause the worldly Church to cast out our Name as Evil, and to cast our Persons out of their Synagogues, yea, and also to kill us, when they can get Power; so if we be true Teachers, we must be ready and willing to suffer all this for Christ's Name-sake.

The false teach to avoid suffering.

Wherefore those Teachers who embrace the Height and Honour of this Life, and will not own the Gospel of Christ, farther than they may thereby procure to themselves, Credit, Reputation, Profit, and Preferment in the World; and to this End, in doubtful and difficult Times carry themselves so subtilly, that whatever Party shall prevail, they may still stand on their Legs, and enjoy their present Prosperity and Preferment, and so are neither hot nor cold, neither truly for the Truth, nor openly against the Truth, but seek by all subtil Means to decline the Cross of Christ.

And

And tho' in Christ himself, they praise his Meanness, Plainness, Simplicity, Suffering and Cross, yet they themselves are delicate, and cannot endure these Things for Christ's Sake in themselves, but bend and frame the whole Course of their Ministry so, as they may obtain all good Things from the World, and avoid and escape all evil Things from it; these are all false Prophets, and Ministers of Antichrist.

By these nine Signs, for I shall name no more now, may the true Prophets and Ministers of Christ be manifestly distinguished and discerned from the false ones of Antichrist, by all the true People of God, who have received his Spirit.

Now let God and his Word be true, and every Man a Lyar.

Two Uses. And now I shall make but two Uses of this Discourse briefly, and so conclude for this time. And the first shall be to those of you who are spiritual Christians; and the second to the carnal Clergy.

1 Use. To spiritual Christians. *First*, You who are true Believers and spiritual Christians, may judge aright, by what you have heard of the present Clergy, or common Ministry of the Nation; and may see by the clear Light of the Word, that they, for the generallity of them, are not true, but false Prophets; not the Ministers of Christ, but of Antichrist; not sent of God, nor anointed by his Spirit, but ordained and appointed by Men, at their own Desire and seeking for worldly Advantage Sake; Men who stand and minister in the Church, only in the Strength of their Academical Degrees, and Ecclesiastical Ordination, but do not stand and feed the People in the Strength of the Lord,

and

and in the Majeſty of the Name of their God. And this corrupt Miniſtry, or carnal Clergy, have deceived the People and Nations with a corrupt and carnal Underſtanding of Chriſt, and of the Scriptures, and of the Kingdom of Chriſt, and of the Government of his Kingdom, and of all the Things of Chriſt; yea, they have under the Name and Pretence of Chriſt, ſet up a Church to Antichriſt every where, and do continually miſ-lead thouſands of poor Souls, and carry them captive to Hell, and that under the Colour and Pretence of Religion.

And this, I ſay, is the great Evil in theſe falſe Teachers, that under the Name of Chriſt, they fight againſt Chriſt, and under the Name of the Word, they fight againſt the Word, and under the Name of the Church, they fight againſt the Church: And this is a grievous Abomination of Deſolation in the Temple of God, that they who ſhould be the Chief for the Truth, are the Chief againſt it; and that they who ſhould be faithful Witneſſes to the holy Truth of Chriſt, ſhould prove lying Witneſſes againſt it. If a prophane Perſon, or Heathen ſhould do this, it would be Wickedneſs and Impiety even in them; but this is horrible Abomination, and Antichriſtianiſm in the Church of Chriſt; that they, who are come into it as Friends, and have obtained the chief Places in it, ſhould yet under this Vizard be indeed very Enemies, and Seducers, and Hinderers of the Word of Chriſt crucified. Wherefore ſaith the Truth againſt ſuch, *Pſal.* lv. 12. *It was not an Enemy that reproached me, then I could have born it; neither was it he that hated me, that magnified himſelf againſt me, for then I would have hid my*

my self from him; but it was thou, a Man, mine Equal, my Guide, and my Acquaintance; we took sweet Counsel together, and walked unto the House of God in Company, &c.

And so these false Teachers are these familiar Enemies, who exercise all their Hatred under the Pretence of Love, all their Enmity under Pretence of Friendship, and practice all their Wickedness under a Form of Godliness; and by this Subtilty have they deceived the World. They will not plainly contradict the Words of the Prophets, Apostles and Christ, in the Letter of it, but will praise it, and speak well of it; but yet they are utter Enemies to the true and spiritual Meaning of it, both in their Lives and Doctrine: And the more these Men make a Shew of Religion and Holiness, the greater Antichrists they be in the Church.

Wherefore to you who are true Christans, and have received an Anointing from God, this is the Word and Charge of God, *Come out from among them, my People, and touch not the unclean Thing*; that is, their carnal Doctrine; have nothing to do with such Prophets and Ministers, but remember what Christ saith, *John* x. that *His Sheep hear his Voice, and will not hear the Voice of Strangers; for they know the Voice of Strangers*. And if any of you live in any Town or Parish, where such false Prophets are, though they go under the Name of Godly and Orthodox, yet touch not the unclean Thing; but know, that it is better for you Believers to assemble together among your selves, tho' you be but few, than to communicate with the false Prophets in their false Ordinances; seeing Christ hath promised his Presence to his Believers, even where but *two or three meet together*

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in his Name; yea, hath ſaid, *If any two of you ſhall agree together to ask any Thing on Earth, it ſhall be done of my Father which is in Heaven.* And if you, having theſe Promiſes, ſhall meet together among yourſelves, in the Name and Spirit of Chriſt, in the Uſe of the Word, and Prayer of Faith, lo Chriſt himſelf will be with you; and tho' you be but few, yet are you the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of Truth, and of that very Church, againſt which the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail. And thus much to you ſpiritual Chriſtians.

2. And now for the carnal Clergy, or falſe Prophets, their Burden is this, from the Lord: You have run when you were not ſent, you have ſaid, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, when the Lord hath not ſpoken by you; you have grieved the Hearts of the Faithful, and ſtrengthened the Hands of the Wicked; you have been forward to advance the Form of Godlineſs, whilſt you have been bitter Enemies to the Power of it; you have deceived the Nations, and made them drunk with the Cup of the Wine of your Fornications; you have done more againſt Chriſt and his true Church, and more for Antichriſt and his falſe Church, than all the People in theſe Nations beſides. Wherefore *this is the Word of the Lord God to you*, throughout all your Quarters, That the Nations ſhall not much longer be deceived by you, nor buy any more of your Merchandize; for your Wine is the Poyſon of Dragons, and the cruel Venom of Aſps; your Doctrine being the Word of Philoſophy, and not of Faith; after the Mind of Man, but contrary to Chriſt's Mind; to ſet up yourſelves and your own Intereſt, to the Prejudice of Chriſt's Word and People. Wherefore how much you have

2. *Uſe. To the carnal Clergy.*

have glorified yourſelves, and lived deliciouſly by this Trade, of making Merchandize of the Word of God, ſo much Torment and Sorrow ſhall God give you, and your Plagues ſhall come upon you in a Day, and your Judgment in an Hour; and your Lovers ſhall not be able to help you, nor the Pititioners for you, to uphold you; but God ſhall bring you down wonderfully, by the clear Light of his Word, and his mighty and unreſiſtable Providence accompanying it; and the World ſhall tremble and wonder at the Noiſe of your Downfal; and the Heavens, and holy Apoſtles, and Prophets, ſhall rejoyce over you, when God ſhall avenge their Cauſe upon you. And the Lord will ſave his Flock, and they ſhall be no more a Prey to you, neither ſhall you any more ſerve yourſelves of them. And he will ſet up one Shepherd over them, even Jeſus Chriſt; and he ſhall feed them, and be their Shepherd. And till theſe Things be fully brought to paſs, you ſhall be cloathed with Trembling, when you ſhall perceive the Lord is riſen up to perform all theſe Things, according to his Word.

And now for Concluſion, If any of you, or moſt of you, or all of you, are offended at theſe Things, in ſuch Sort, that you cannot contain yourſelves from Anger and bitter Zeal, I do intreat you, to conſider ſeriouſly, how much better, and more profitable to your eternal Salvation it would be, for you to reſiſt and refrain from ſuch evil and unchriſtian Paſſions, and that you would rather, if there be any hope, return to your own Hearts, and try your Works, and repent before our holy and righteous Lord, and return truly and ſpeedily to Chriſt from Antichriſt, leſt you be inwrapped both in his temporal and eternal Deſtruction.

And thus much was delivered to the Univerſity Congregation *in* Cambridge, *for a Teſtimony againſt them, except they repent. The reſt, for the Subſtance of it, was delivered elſewhere in the Town, Anno* 1653, *as followeth,*

THE

THE Tryal of Spirits.

1 John iv. 1, *&c.*

Believe not every Spirit, &c.

IN this Scripture we have noted theſe ſix Things.

1. That the Apoſtle gives the faithful Notice of a great Evil riſen up, *Many falſe Prophets are gone into the World.*

2. He preſcribes them a ſufficient Remedy againſt that Evil, *Believe not every Spirit, but try*, &c,

3. He gives them a right Rule for Tryal, *v.* 2, and 3.

4. He ſhews with whom theſe falſe Prophets, who come in the Spirit of Antichriſt, ſhould not prevail, to wit, with none of the true Children of God, *v.* 4.

5. With whom they ſhould prevail, to wit, with the worldly and carnal People, *v.* 5.

6. He ſhews how the Spirit of Truth and Error may be known in the People, as well as in the Teachers, *v.* 6.

Of the three firſt of theſe Points I have ſpoken already in the *Univerſity Congregation.* The laſt Time I ſpake of the third Thing, that is, *The Rule of Tryal*, how the falſe Prophets may be known and diſcerned from the True: And I gave forth clearly and plainly out of the Word of God *nine Signs* to diſtinguiſh them, not One of which

can poſſibly be contradicted, but by the Spirit of Antichriſt, or by the prophane and ignorant World: And then I alſo delivered two Uſes, the One to ſpiritual Chriſtians, and the Other to the carnal Clergy, all which you may have Recourſe to in the former Diſcourſe.

But how theſe Things have ſince vexed and tormented the falſe Prophets, you very well know; and how exceedingly grieved and angry they are, that this Word of God ſhould be taught the People, and that in their Preſence. Unto which Word of Chriſt, they ſay by their Deeds, as Satan in the Poſſeſſed ſaid once to Chriſt himſelf in Words, *Mark* i. 24. *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus of* Nazareth? *Art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee who thou art, the holy One of God.* This unclean Spirit knew and acknowledged Chriſt to be the holy one of God, and yet would have nothing to do with him, becauſe he was come to deſtroy him. So theſe falſe Prophets cannot chooſe but acknowledge, in their Hearts at leaſt, that the Word that hath been taught them, is the holy Word of God, but yet they ſay, *What have we to do with it? For it is come to deſtroy us.* For the more the Word of Chriſt is held forth in the Clearneſs and Plainneſs of the Goſpel, the more doth it deſtroy them, and their Affairs: Their carnal Clergy, flowing from the antichriſtian Fountain of the Univerſities; their Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies, ariſing out of the Clergy; their Presbyterian Government, ſpringing up out of their Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies; their National Church, the Product of their Preſbyterian Government; together with their worldly Power and Domination, their high Titles, their Scarlet Robes, their Divinity Degrees, *&c.* I

ſay,

ſay, the Word of the Goſpel comes with full Might and Mind to deſtroy all theſe, and all their other Things, in which their Souls delight, as bringing worldly Profit, Power and Honour to them. Wherefore this Word, which abaſes and caſts down them, and all their Things, and exalts Chriſt alone, and all his Things, they cannot endure; but do account it their Reproach and Shame, and ſay to it, *What have we to do with thee, thou holy Word of God? For thou art come to deſtroy us*; and ſo againſt this Word they are angry and enraged at no ordinary or human Rate, but as *David* ſaith, *Pſal.* lix. *They belch out with their Mouth, and make a Noiſe like a Dog, and go up and down full of Pride, Curſing and Lying. But the Lord laught at theſe Heathen, and hath them in Deriſion, for he ſeeth the Day is coming, when they ſhall wander up and down for Meat, and grudge if they be not ſatisfied.*

Now this Behaviour of theirs, towards the Word of God, is plainly foretold, *Rev.* xvi. 10. 11. where it is ſaid, That *when the God of Heaven poured forth his Vial by the fifth Angel, on the Seat, or Throne of the Beaſt, his Kingdom was full of Darkneſs, and they gnawed their Tongues for pain, and blaſphemed the God of Heaven, becauſe of their Pains and their Sores; and yet repented not of their Deeds.* Now the Throne of the Beaſt in theſe Nations, are the Univerſities, as the Foundation of the Miniſtry; the Vial poured on them, is the true Word of God, or the plain and ſimple Goſpel, which is the Word of Faith, than which, nothing is more grievous to them who have been bred up in Philoſophy, and in the Knowledge, Wiſdom, Learning, Righteouſneſs, and Spirit of the World: Now the primary Event of the pouring forth of

this Vial of the Word of God on this Seat, is the Darkning of Antichriſt's Kingdom, as it is ſaid, *His Kingdom was full of Darkneſs*; it was full of Darkneſs before, but now it is diſcovered to be full of Darkneſs; their Philoſophy is Darkneſs, and vain Deceit; their School Divinity, Darkneſs and Antichriſtianiſm; their Divinity Acts and Clerums, Darkneſs; their Profeſſorſhips of Divinity, Darkneſs; yea, all their Doctrine, Faith, Worſhip, Works, Church Diſcipline, Titles, Ordination, and all are diſcovered to be Darkneſs, even groſs Darkneſs, by the Word of Faith: And then follows the ſecundary Event of the pouring forth of this Vial, which is, *They gnawed their Tongues for pain, and blaſphemed the God of Heaven, becauſe of their Pains and Sores which the Word inflicted on them*; that is, they had not the ordinary Anger of Men againſt the Word, but the Anger and Wrath of Devils, cauſing them to blaſpheme again. But yet for all theſe Things, *they repented not of their Deeds*, as we ſee manifeſtly, which yet would have been more profitable for them.

And this alſo diſcovers them to be falſe Prophets indeed, and the right Miniſters of Antichriſt: And this appertains to the ſixth Sign of falſe Prophets, which I gave before.

The Fourth general Point.

The 4th General Point: to wit, with whom Antichriſt can not prevail.

And now I proceed to the fourth Thing, wherein the Apoſtle ſhews, with whom the falſe Prophets, which come in the Spirit of Antichriſt, ſhould not prevail; namely, with none of the true Children of God: And this is ſet down in *v.* 4.

Ye are of God little Children, and have overcome them; becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World.

Here now the Apoſtle ſhews the Victory which the truly faithful and ſpiritual Chriſtians do obtain over Antichriſt, and his falſe Prophets, together with the Grounds of that Victory.

1. The Victory is ſet down in theſe Words, *Little Children ye have overcome them.*

2. The Grounds of this Victory are Two.

1. Becauſe the Faithful are of God, as Children of their Father: *Ye are of God little Children, and have overcome them.*

2. Becauſe that Spirit which the Faithful have received, and which dwells in them, is ſtronger and mightier than that Spirit which the World receives, and which dwells in them. *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World.*

1. *The Victory which the Faithful do obtain over Antichriſt, and his Prophets.*

I ſhall firſt ſpeak ſomthing of the Victory itſelf, that is, of that glorious Victory which all the true Children of God do obtain over Antichriſt. For tho' Antichriſt and his Teachers do come in Chriſt's Name, as Chriſt hath foretold, and in Sheeps Cloathing; and tho' they transform themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and come with all Deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs, holding forth a falſe Chriſt the Head; a falſe Church the Body; a falſe Word, a falſe Worſhip, falſe Works, falſe Ordinances, and all theſe falſe things exceedingly like the true, and in the very Form and Appearance of the true; in ſuch ſort, that they prevail with all the national Church, and the generallity of the People of the World, which all wander after them; yet are they not able by all theſe things

to prevail with any of the true Children of God, as Chriſt hath taught us, ſaying, *Many falſe Chriſts and falſe Prophets ſhall ariſe, and ſhall come with lying Signs and Wonders; able, if it were poſſible, to deceive the Elect:* And tho' they do deceive all others, yet it is not poſſible for them to deceive the Elect of God, that is, throughly and fully, as they do deceive others, but the faithful and elect People of God do eſcape their Deceits, and do overcome them; yea, tho' they be but little Children, new in the Faith, and young in Chriſt, yet do they overcome all the falſe Prophets in the World. For theſe little Children are ſo ſtrip'd of their old Nature, that they overcome the Luſts of the Fleſh, the Luſts of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, which are not of God, but of the World, and thro' which only, the Miniſters of Antichriſt are mighty: And ſo thoſe Teachers can find nothing in them, on which they can lay hold to prevail. Beſides, as new born Babes can diſcern and taſte which is good and wholſom Milk, and ſuitable to them, and can refuſe what is otherwiſe; and this Inſtinct they have in their very Nature, as ſoon as they have a Being, to judge of their Food, which is good for them, and which is hurtful. So the Children of God, as ſoon as ever they by Faith are made Partakers of the divine Nature, they can immediately judge of the Milk of the Word, and can ſurely taſte and diſcern whether it be ſincere or adulterated, whether it be good or hurtful for them. And ſo in the Virtue of their new Nature, they reject and overcome all the falſe Doctrine of the falſe Teachers.

Uſes. And thus we have ſeen all along, in ſeveral Ages of the Reign of Antichriſt, that Chriſt hath always had a People of his own, though but few

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in Number, and mean in Condition, and diſpiſed of the World, whom *Antichriſt* never could prevail againſt, neither by the Subtilty of his Doctrine, nor by the Violence of his Tyranny; but they have by their Faith and Patience, and Word of their Teſtimony, withſtood him, and his Multitudes, yea, the whole World, whom he hath all along ſeduced.

Chriſt hath alway kept his own.

Thus in every Age, hath Chriſt had ſo great Care of all thoſe whom his Father had given him, that he hath loſt none of them, no, not one ſingle Perſon, but by his Word and Spirit which he hath put into them, and by his own Preſence in them, thro' his Word and Spirit, he hath ſtill preſerved them, and hath ſtrengthened them to oppoſe and reſiſt Antichriſt to the Death, and to overcome as he overcame.

Antichriſt hath never prevailed againſt one of the Elect.

And ſo during all the Reign of Antichriſt in the World, whom hath he prevailed withal, and deceived, but only the World? But not one ſingle Perſon of the Elect Children of God, tho' he hath eſpecially ſought to prevail with them.

The Care of the true Church committed only unto Chriſt.

But Jeſus Chriſt, who only knows who are his, hath kept all along thoſe whom he hath known, that we might underſtand that the Care of the true Church is committed to him alone from the Father, and that all the Magiſtrates and Powers of the World are not at all capable of ſuch a Truſt, which would have been too great for the very Angels of Heaven.

And tho' Antichriſt, during his Reign, had inwrapped the Elect themſelves into all his Errors, before Faith came, as the firſt *Adam* had inwrapped them in all his Sin; yet as God wrought Faith in them, and gave them his Spirit, ſo they by de-

grees recovered out of the Errors of Antichrist, and prevailed against them.

2 Use. Antichrist hath no Cause to boast, nor the true Church to be discouraged for any that are lost.

Lastly, Seeing all the true Children of God do overcome Antichrist and his Ministers, Antichrist hath no Cause to boast of his Reign in the World, nor the true Church of Christ to be discouraged at it. Antichrist, by all his Subtilty and Strength, and by all his own Ecclesiastical Power, and by all the temporal Power of Princes, whom he hath seduced, hath conquered to himself none but the World, that is, the People that were not of God. And the true spiritual Church, of Christ's own building, the *New Jerusalem* from above, that sojourns in this World, hath not lost one Stone out of its Building, nor one Member out of its Body, by all that Antichrist, and the Devil his Head could do. And therefore Antichrist hath no Cause to boast; for he hath got none but his own: And the true Church hath no Cause to be discouraged, for it hath lost none of its own: And none ever went out from it, but those that were not of it; and all that were truly of it, have ever continued with it.

And thus much briefly touching the Victory which the Faithful obtain against Antichrist and his Prophets.

The grounds of their Victory.

Now the Grounds of this Victory here named, are Two.

1 Because they are of God.

1. The *First* is, because they are of God: *Ye are of God, little Children, and have overcome them.*

Antichrist and his false Prophets cannot prevail against the truly Faithful, because they are of God, as the Spirit also speaks elsewhere, saying, 1. *Cor.* i. 30. *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus*: And they are

As Children of their Father.

of God, as Children are of the Father, as it is written

ten, *Jam.* i. 18. *Of his own Will begat he us, by the Word of Truth, that we ſhould be a kind of firſt Fruits of his Creatures.*

So that, as the Children of Men, are of their Fathers, thro' a natural Generation and Being; ſo the Faithful are of God, thro' a ſpiritual Generation and Being.

And ſo partake of his very Nature.

And as the Children of Men partake of the very Nature of their Fathers, ſo doth the Children of God partake of the divine Nature; the Faithful being born again, *not of corruptible, but of incorruptible Seed, by the Word of God, which lives and abides for ever.*

That as Jeſus Chriſt, who according to his human Nature, was a Man, and in all Things like to us, Sin excepted, came to be of God, and to be the Son of God, thro' the Coming and Dwelling of the living Word of God in his Fleſh, according to the Love, Will, and Counſel of the Father; ſo the ſame living Word, coming and dwelling in the Faithful, his Members, according to the ſame Love, Will, and Counſel of God, they alſo come to be of God in Chriſt, as Chriſt is of God, according to his human Nature.

And as Chriſt being thus of God, according to the Word of God that dwelt in his human Nature, overcame the Devil, the Head of Antichriſt, and Antichriſt and his Body, the Temple of the Devil; ſo do all Chriſt's Members overcome Antichriſt, and his Prophets, thro' the ſame living Word of God dwelling in them, or thro' the Word of Righteouſneſs and Life, its being incarnate in them, that is, its being written in their Hearts by the Spirit, or put into their inward Parts. Wherefore Chriſt throughout, that is, from the Head itſelf

ſelf to the loweſt Member, is called *Immanuel*, God with us; or, which is all one, *God manifeſted in the Fleſh*.

And for this Cauſe theſe Faithful, or little Children of God, cannot be prevailed againſt, inaſmuch as they are of God, and ſo have in them, by true Union and Communion, the Nature of God, and the Word of God, and the Spirit of God, and the Righteouſneſs of God, and the Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God, and the Life and Light of God, and all the Things of God, as the Apoſtle *Paul* ſaith, *In the new Creature all Things are become new; and all Things*, that is, all theſe new Things, *are of God*, that is, they are the very Things of God. And ſo theſe faithful People cannot be prevailed againſt by Antichriſt, or by the Devil, the Head of Antichriſt; but they do prevail againſt the Doctrine of Antichriſt, by the Doctrine of Chriſt; againſt the Spirit of Antichriſt, by the Spirit of Chriſt; againſt the Sin of Antichriſt, by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt; againſt the Error of Antichriſt, by the Truth of Chriſt; and againſt all the Things of Antichriſt, by the infinite and eternal Things of Chriſt.

Wherefore you ſee, that all they that are of God, thro' a new Birth, and are the true Children of that heavenly Father, and do partake of his divine Nature, and all his divine Things, they cannot be overcome of Antichriſt and his Prophets, but they do mightily overcome them all, thro' that immortal Seed of the true and living Word of God, of which they are born, and in which they live and act.

But, they that are overcome by Antichriſt and his Teachers, through their deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs, they never were the true Children of

of God, but Hypocrites and Unbelievers, under a Form of Godlineſs; that is, as the Apoſtle ſtiles them, Baſtards, or falſe Children, who never had received the true Nature of God through Faith.

The Second Ground.

And now follows the ſecond Ground, why the Faithful cannot be overcome by Antichriſt, and his Prophets; to wit,

2. Ground of the Victory of the Faithful, to wit, becauſe greater is he that is in them, than he that is in the World.

Becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World.

And here the Apoſtle ſhews that the true faithful Chriſtians, are not only of God, but alſo have God himſelf dwelling and abiding in them: *For they are built up by the Spirit to be the Habitation of God; and God is in them of a Truth*; and that not by created Habits of Grace, as Antichriſt and his Prophets have thought and taught; but the true God is in them of a Truth, and he dwells in them, and walks in them, as himſelf hath ſaid, and *the Tabernacle of God is with Men.* And now, as the Sun is never without its Light and Heat, and all its Virtues, and where-ever it goes, all theſe go along with it, being inſeparable from it; ſo wherever the Lord God comes, he comes with all his Righteouſneſs, Wiſdom, Power, Peace, Joy, and all his infinite and eternal Things; and where God himſelf is, there are all the Things of God.

And thus God, in his faithful People, is greater than he that is in the World; that is, he is greater than Antichriſt, and the Devil his Head. He is greater in his true Word, than they in their pretended Word; greater in his true Spirit, than they

they in their pretended Spirit; greater in his true Righteousness, than they in their pretended Righteousness; greater in his true Wisdom and Power, than they in their pretended Wisdom and Power, *&c. Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World.* Now for certain, the less is overcome by the greater; and seeing God and his Spirit in his Saints, is greater in Goodness, Righteousness, Wisdom, and all Things, than the Devil is in Antichrist and his Prophets; therefore the Faithful, in whom God dwells, and manifests himself, must needs overcome Antichrist, and the false Prophets, in whom the Devil dwells and manifests himself.

Now hence we may learn several Things.

1 Use. *Antichrist prevails against Forms, but not against God in the Flesh.*

And *first*, we may learn, That Antichrist can prevail against any outward Form of Religion and Godliness, against any human Virtues, and Graces, and Works, and Prayers, or any Thing that is of Man, or flows from him, tho' in never so great Appearance of Holiness; as we by sad Experience have seen, many Men of great seeming Religion, famous for Preaching and Praying, and reputed Pillars in the Church, when they have come hither into the University, where Antichrist and his Spirit have remained in their full Strength, notwithstanding the great Consumption which God hath brought on them, by his Word in other Parts, how soon have they ceased from that Sense of the Gospel which they once seemed to have had; and how suddenly have they been entangled and overcome with the Spirit of the University, and of Antichrist, for worldly Honour and Advantage Sake? And so the highest and strongest formal Religion in the Church, Antichrist can soon prevail against.

But

But Antichriſt can never prevail againſt God in the Saints, nor againſt the Righteouſneſs, Wiſdom and Power of God in them, all which are contained in his true Preſence; nor againſt the Faith, Hope and Love of Saints, which are the Works of God in them by his Spirit; againſt theſe Antichriſt cannot prevail; *For greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World.*

So then, if thou haſt any thing in thee that is truly of God, or rather, that is God himſelf in thee, that, Antichriſt cannot overcome by all his Arts and Power; but he will eaſily overcome any thing elſe. Antichriſt cannot prevail againſt *Immanuel*, which is God with us, nor againſt the Myſtery of Godlineſs in us, which is *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*; but every other thing, tho' it ſeems never ſo Angelical, he prevails againſt.

2. We may learn hence, That it is not an eaſie Thing to overcome Antichriſt, and to get the Victory over the Beaſt, and his Image, and his Mark, and the Number of his Name, ſeeing Antichriſt's Coming is *after the Working of Satan*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, and thro' Antichriſt the Devil himſelf ſpeaks, works and acts, yet as an Angel of Light, in all lying or falſe Power, Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs: And this he doth for the Damnation of Men, and to bring them all, who have no true Love to the Truth, to periſh with himſelf for ever. And his Operation of Error is ſo mighty and efficacious, that it cannot be reſiſted and overcome by any in all the World, but by thoſe who are born of God, and do partake of his Nature and Preſence in them. For the Power, Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs of Antichriſt and his Prophets, which is ſo ſuitable to the Nature of the World,

2. Uſe. *Not eaſie to overcome Antichriſt, ſeeing he is the Temple of the Devil.*

World, and so glorious in its Eye, cannot possibly be overcome, but by the true Power, Wisdom and Righteousness of God in his true Children or Prophets.

3 Use. *Not to be dismayed at the Fulness of Antichrist seeing the Fulness of Christ is greater.*

3. Hence also let us learn, Not to be dismayed at Antichrist and his Prophets, who have in all Ages got such Reputation, Power and Glory to themselves in the World, because of their seeming Learning, Righteousness and Religion; seeing Christ in us, and in all his poor People, is infinitely more mighty than they are, and the Devil in them; and nothing can prevail against us, except first it can prevail against Christ. Wherefore if we in ourselves are never so weak, and thro' our Weakness never so fearful and trembling, yet let us not be discouraged, or faint, seeing our Might is not in ourselves, but in Christ, who dwells in us, and who is infinitely greater *than he that dwells in the World.* He that dwells in us thro' Faith, is greater than he that dwells in them thro' Unbelief; and in his Strength, let us abide by his Word and Doctrine, even to Suffering and Death, if need be; and in all these Evils we shall overcome them, by whom we seem to be overcome, as also Christ our Head did.

And thus much for the fourth general Thing.

The Fifth Point.

The Fifth general Point: To wit, with whom Antichrist doth prevail.

The Apostle shews *with whom Antichrist and his Teachers should prevail*; to wit, *with the worldly and carnal People, v. 5.*

They are of the World, therefore speak they of the World, and the World hears them.

The World hears them.

Antichriſt and his Prophets prevail with the World and worldly People, and do obtain their Favour, Love, and Applauſe; and they are their Auditors, and delight in them and their Doctrine. *The World hears them.*

Now by the *World*, here is meant ſuch People, who tho' they have an outward Chriſtianity and Religion, yet inwardly remain in their natural Condition and Corruption, without any true Renewing thro' Faith and the Spirit. And all ſuch People, notwithſtanding their ſeeming Religion and Righteouſneſs, do love themſelves, and this World, and the Things of it, better than Jeſus Chriſt and his Truth. And theſe here are called the World: And this World, or theſe worldly Chriſtians, do hear and entertain the Teachers of Antichriſt and their Doctrine. *Who are the World.*

Two Grounds of which the Apoſtle here gives us, to wit, *why theſe People cleave to theſe Teachers.* Grounds.

1. The *firſt* is, *Becauſe theſe Teachers are of the World.*
2. *Becauſe they ſpeak of the World.*

1. *They are of the World.*

That is, tho' by their Breeding and Profeſſion, their Degrees and Ordination, they ſeem to be ſet at a great Diſtance from the common People, and to be nearer the Kingdom of God, and the Knowledge and Poſſeſſion of it, than the common People of the World; yet for all this, they in deed and in truth are ſtill of the World; and all their liberal Education, their manner of Life, their 1 *Becauſe they are of the World.*

their Study, Knowledge, Learning, Languages, Sciences, Degrees, and Ordination, doth not at all change their inward evil Nature, Mind, Will, Affections, nor the corrupt Diſpoſition and Principle in which they were born; but notwithſtanding all theſe Things, they are ſtill the very ſame throughout, as when they came firſt into the World, being deſtitute of a new Birth, and heavenly Nature: Nay, by all theſe Things they are more taken into the Spirit of the World, into the Corruptions and Evils of it, into the Pride, Luſt, Covetouſneſs, and Ambition of it, by how much through ſuch Indowments and Accompliſhments they think themſelves better than other Men; and ſo, notwithſtanding their Academical Degrees, and Eccleſiaſtical Orders, they are not leſs, but more of the World, even fully of the World.

Uſe. And hence we may learn, That it is not Study, Parts, Breeding, Learning, nor any natural Indowments, or acquired Accompliſhments, that will deliver any Man out of this World, or corrupt State of Mankind, or that can change his Nature, or give him the leaſt Place or Intereſt in the Kingdom of God; but only a new Birth, a true Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, whereby we are made the Children of God; without which, Men are ſtill of the World, notwithſtanding all their other Improvements.

Univerſities cannot be the Fountain of the true Miniſtry. And this very thing manifeſts, that *Univerſities* cannot be the *Fountain of the true Miniſtry of the Goſpel*, ſeeing all the Education in it, Philoſophical, Moral, and Theological, cannot change Mens Natures, or deliver them from their Corruptions, or tranſlate them one Hairs Breadth out of this preſent evil World; yea, generally we ſee, that by

by *Univerſity-Education*, as things have hitherto been managed, Youth is made more of the World, than they were by Nature, thro' the high Improvment of their Corruptions, by their daily Converſe with the Heathens, their vain Philoſophers, and filthy and obſcene Poets; and by theſe heatheniſh abominable Accompliſhments, are they made the more fit Teachers for the World and worldly People, and become the more ſuitable to them, and obtain the greater Aptneſs and Ability to pleaſe them. Wherefore it may be moſt truly ſaid of that Miniſtry that flows meerly from the Fountain of the *Univerſities*, that it is of the World.

And now, when the Teachers are of one Nature and Principle, of one Heart, Mind and Conſent with the Hearers, there muſt needs be a great Agreement between them; for each one approves and loves that which is like himſelf; and ſo the worldly People muſt needs cleave to the Teachers that are of the World.

Yea farther, and which is very conſiderable, the World can endure and like any Doctrine, tho' in the Letter never ſo Holy and Spiritual, from ſuch Teachers as are of one Nature and Spirit with itſelf. And he that ſpeaks of the Things of Chriſt, without the Spirit of Chriſt, and by the Spirit of the World, can never, by any ſuch Doctrine, be grievous to the World, but rather acceptable: Seeing there is more in the Nature of thoſe Teachers to reconcile the World to them, than in their Doctrine to ſet the World againſt them: For the World cannot but agree with thoſe Teachers that are of the World, let their Doctrine in the Letter be what it will.

Whereas on the contrary, the Faithful are not of the World, but of another Seed, Nature, and

Principle, which is in direct Enmity to the World; and ſo they ſpeaking the Things of Chriſt, in the Spirit of Chriſt, muſt needs be grievous and troubleſome to them who have the Spirit of the World; and the Friends of Chriſt crucified, cannot but be grievous to the Friends of this World.

And this for the firſt Ground.

2. *The ſecond Ground, Why the worldly People hear the worldly Teachers, is this,*

Becauſe they ſpeak of the World.

2 Becauſe they ſpeak of the World. Their ſpeaking of the World may be underſtood in a threefold Senſe.

For as they are, ſo they ſpeak, *Out of the abundance of the Heart, the Mouh ſpeaketh*; and ſo they that are of the World, ſpeak of the World: And this we may conceive of in three Particulars;

1 They ſpeak the ſpiritual Word of God in a carnal Senſe.

1. The worldly Teachers ſpeak of the World, that is, they ſpeak the ſpiritual Word of God, in a carnal and worldly Senſe; they ſpeak of divine Things as of human Things, according to their natural and human Mind, Reaſon, Knowledge, Learning and Underſtanding of them. And ſo, they give forth Chriſt himſelf, and his Kingdom, and all his Things, his Redemption, Reconciliation, Salvation, as alſo, Faith, Hope, Love, and all the Graces of the Spirit, and Riches of Chriſt, they give forth all theſe Things in a carnal Underſtanding and Notion to the People. And the World can like well enough of Chriſt, his Kingdom, and Things, in a worldly Senſe, they can bear or endure Faith and Repentance, and the New Creature, and the New *Jeruſalem* in a carnal Senſe; while in the true ſpiritual Senſe of them,

and

and as they are in themſelves, and according to the Mind of Chriſt, they are the greateſt Enemies to them that can be.

Now Believers muſt know in this Matter, that whoever ſpeaks the Things of God's Spirit, by the Spirit of a Man, or ſpiritual Things, in a human, carnal, and worldly Senſe, is a falſe Prophet, and Teacher of Antichriſt. Whoever reading or hearing the Goſpel of God our Saviour, doth underſtand and frame it after his own human Senſe, and doth not ſo underſtand it as the Lord hath ſpoken it, he is a falſe Prophet, underſtanding and ſpeaking the Goſpel after his own Mind, but contrary to Chriſt's ; and theſe open their own Hearts to the People, and not God's.

Now when the People that are of the World, hear the Teachers that are of the World, ſpeaking ſpiritual Things in a carnal and worldly Senſe, and according to ſuch an Apprehenſion as they have already in their own Hearts, they do exceedingly cleave to, and embrace ſuch Teachers, and their Doctrine.

For ſuch Doctrine, Man in his natural Condition can well like of, ſeeing it leads Men only to a Change of outward Works, and to a Performance of outward Worſhip, which any Man by his own natural Abilities can perform ; and the World can well endure to put on the faireſt Form of Godlineſs, and the ſtricteſt, ſo their Nature inwardly may remain the ſame.

And thus the worldly People comply readily with the worldly Doctrine of the worldly Teachers, ſeeing it is after the Senſe and Mind of Man.

But on the contrary, Christ and his Seed, as they are not of the World, so neither do they speak of the World, but being of God, they speak the Things of God, according to God; they speak of the Things of God, by the Spirit of God, and so according to the Mind of God: They speak of the Things of God, in the Wisdom, Righteousness, Truth, Light and Life of God; and thus the World cannot endure the Word, nor those that teach it.

2 They speak the spiritual Word of God to a carnal End.

2. The Prophets of Antichrist speak of the World, that is, they turn the Word of God into worldly and carnal Doctrine, for worldly Advantage Sake; they preach the spiritual Word of God carnally, that they may make it serve their own Turns and Ends. That Word of the Gospel, which God hath given only to serve the spiritual and eternal Welfare of his Church, the worldly Teachers frame and use this, only thereby to serve their own worldly Credit and Reputation, their worldly Profit and Preferment, and their worldly Authority and Dominion.

And thus that Word of Faith, which in its own proper Nature and Working, calls off all Men from this World, and the Things of it, to the Kingdom and Glory of God; they make this very Word to sound carnally, that by it they may seek themselves, and the Things of this present Life.

But Christ and his Seed, who are of God, they speak of God, and not of the World, seeking no worldly Thing at all by the Word of God, which they teach and hold forth, as is manifest in the Life of Christ, and his Christians.

3. The Ministers of Antichrist, or worldly *Teachers* speak of the World, that is, they turn the Word

Word of God into worldly Doctrine, that thereby they may avoid the Croſs, which the Word of God, in the ſpiritual Senſe of it, would certainly expoſe them to. But now theſe worldly Teachers, as they love the World, ſo they cannot endure the Croſs, that is, Reproach, Poverty, Shame, Suffering and Death, for the true Word. Wherefore they preach the Goſpel in ſuch a Senſe, as ſhall pleaſe the World, but never offend them; as ſhall make the World their Friends, but never their Enemies; for they cannot endure to think of, much leſs to ſuffer the utmoſt Hatred and Perſecution of the World for Chriſt's Name-ſake. Wherefore I ſay again, tho' in Chriſt, they will praiſe his Reproach, his Shame, his Poverty, his Tribulation, his Death and Crucifying, yet they cannot endure theſe Things in themſelves, for his Truth's Sake; but are moſt careful and ſtudious to preach the Word of God in ſuch a worldly Senſe, as ſhall never provoke the World againſt them, to do them the leaſt Harm; but ſhall rather incline them to confer upon them, according to their own Phraſe, all Countenance and Maintenance. And thus the worldly Teachers ſpeak of the World, in this Senſe alſo.

3 They turn the Word of God into worldly Doctrine to avoid the Croſs.

But Chriſt and his Seed, who are of God, they ſpeak not of the World, but of God, that is, they ſpeak the Word of God, according to God, never regarding whether the World be pleaſed or diſpleaſed therewith. Yea, they ſpeak God's Word, according to God's Mind, though they certainly know, that it will procure them all Sorts of Reproaches, and Tribulations, and all Manner of Evil to be ſpoken and done againſt them; inaſmuch as they love God and his Word, more than themſelves and this World: And ſo, they are

ſo far from declining the Croſs of Chriſt, which the right Confeſſion of the Word will bring upon them, that they account it their greateſt Glorifying, *to have Fellowſhip with Chriſt in his Sufferings, and to be made conformable to him in his Death:* All which Things he endured, becauſe he ſpake God's Word according to God's Mind, and contrary to the Mind of the World, and worldly Church.

And thus we ſee by *John*'s Doctrine, who ſpake by the Spirit, who they are, with whom Antichriſt and his falſe Prophets prevail, to wit, the World and worldly People; as alſo the Grounds why they prevail with them, namely, becauſe they *are of the World, and ſpeak of the World.*

And now for the Uſe.

The World hears theſe Teachers, who are, and ſpeak of the World.

1. Uſe. *All natural Men deceived by Antichriſt, whatever their accompliſhments may be.*

And hence *firſt* we learn, That Antichriſt and his Prophets, the worldly Teachers, come with ſuch Deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs, that no natural or worldly Men whatever, of whatever Parts, Learning, Knowledge, Righteouſneſs, can poſſibly diſcern them. If Men are but natural Men, tho' never ſo accompliſhed, Antichriſt deceives them all, and makes them his Diſciples.

For Antichriſt comes ſo ſubtilly, and in ſuch glorious Appearances of Holineſs and Religion, that none can know him and his Ways, except they be ſingularly taught of God; according to that of Chriſt to his Diſciples, *To you it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God, to them it is not given.* And to whom it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Chriſt, to them alſo

alſo is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Antichriſt: And none can truly know, either the One, or the Other, without a ſpecial Gift from God.

Whence it is moſt evident, that Men are not able to underſtand Antichriſt, and his Kingdom, and Things, as they are Men learned in Philoſophy, and in the Knowledge of the Tongues, or as they are Men of ſuch and ſuch Degrees and Titles in the Univerſity, or of ſuch and ſuch Eccleſiaſtical Orders in the Church: I ſay, Men by all ſuch Abilities and Accompliſhments, as they ſpeak, are not able to diſcern Antichriſt, but rather are the more ready to be overcome by him, ſeeing by all theſe Human and Eccleſiaſtical Things, Antichriſt can lay the faſter Hold on them, and make them the more his own.

Antichriſt is unknown to them, ſeeing Chriſt is unknown to them.

And Antichriſt muſt needs be unknown to ſuch Men, inaſmuch as Chriſt himſelf, as he is held forth in the Word, and whatever he is and doth in himſelf and Members, is wholly unknown to them; yea, is ſo ſtrangely unknown, that by a prodigious Miſtake, they do judge Chriſt, and his Members, and their Doctrine to be Antichriſt, and his Members, and their Doctrine: And on the contrary, they do judge Antichriſt, and his Members, and their Doctrine, they do account and eſteem of, as of Chriſt himſelf, and his Members, and their Doctrine. And thus is the Multitude of carnal Chriſtians, which are even the whole World almoſt, through the effectual Operation of Satan, brought to think and believe aſſuredly, that the Prophets of Antichriſt, who handle the Scriptures carnally, and after the Mind of Man, do verily teach the very

Doctrine and Truth of God; and of this they are so confident, that they would have the worldly Powers and Magistrates to force all Men to believe as they say, and to practise as they command: Yea, these worldly Men, with all their worldly Accomplishments, are so deluded by Antichrist, that whilst they oppose and persecute the faithful People of God, or rather Christ himself, and his Word, Works, Truth, and Righteousness in them; they verily think they oppose and persecute Antichrist himself, and the Falsness of his Members. And as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, the chief Teachers of the Jewish Church, being Deceivers themselves, did yet call Christ a Deceiver, and in Killing and Crucifying him, thought they did God good Service; so the carnal Clergy, and the Head of them, being Antichrists themselves, do yet tell of, and terrifie People with another Antichrist: And being Seducers themselves, do yet rise up against the very Members of Christ, as Seducers, that thereby they may boast themselves to be Righteous. So throughly and perfectly hath Antichrist deluded and inchanted them, through the *Cup of the Wine of his Fornications.*

Thus the whole World is overcome by Antichrist, and cannot by all their highest Attainments discern him from Christ; only they who are born of God, and are his true Children, and being plain, simple, meek and lowly in Spirit, are taught of God. These only know Antichrist, and overcome him; but these are the little Flock.

Secondly,

Secondly, In that the *World hears the Miniſters of Antichriſt.* 2 Uſe.

We are given to underſtand, That Men that are of a worldly Spirit, and through that, are addicted to the World, and to ſeek and follow after the Profits, Pleaſures, and Honours of this Life, they cannot poſſibly underſtand the Impoſtures and Deceits of Antichriſt and his Teachers, but they all are ſeduced and overcome by them. *Men of a worldly Spirit cannot underſtand the Deceits of Antichriſt*

Whoever therefore do profeſs or pretend to Religion and Godlineſs, and nevertheleſs live in the Spirit of this World, and are ſwallowed up with the Cares and Comforts of this World, all ſuch Chriſtians are a fit Prey for Antichriſt: Seeing,

1. Such carnal Chriſtians are ſo addicted to worldly Occaſions, that they cannot attend to the Word of God in the ſpiritual Senſe of it, which is only known by Temptation, Prayer, and God's own Teaching. And hereupon they want the true Light, by which only Antichriſt can be diſcerned. For Antichriſt comes in ſo great Subtilty and Likneſs to Chriſt, that he cannot be perceived, but by Chriſtians much acquainted with the Word, and much mortified and quickned thro' it.

2. Such carnal Chriſtians, as they neglect the Word in the Spirituality of it, ſo alſo they do love this World, and this quenches in their Hearts the Love of God, as *John* ſaith, *If any Man love this World, the Love of the Father is not in him*; now they whoſe Hearts are inwardly deſtitute of the true Love of God, and yet do outwardly profeſs and worſhip God, all theſe are a fit Prey for Antichriſt.

And

And thus the World loving and seeking itself, and its own Things, receives Antichrist, whilst it cannot discern him. Wherefore the Scriptures do every where give Christians so many Warnings against Covetousness, which takes from Men all true Desire after Christ, and all Regard, Sense, and Knowledge of Antichrist. Christ therefore said to his Disciples, *Take heed and beware of Covetousness; for where the Treasure is, there will the Heart be also*, &c. And thus all they, who are Lovers of themselves, and of this World, the greater outward Profession they make of Religion, the more ready are they to receive and entertain the Ministers of Antichrist, and their Doctrine, seeing *they are, and speak of the World.*

3. Use. *The carnal Clergy have a numerous Auditory.*

3. Seeing the *World hears Antichrist, and his Teachers*, we are to take notice, That the carnal and Antichristian Ministers have a numerous Auditory, all the worldly People cleaving and joyning to them, because they speak that which is in their Hearts: And therefore it is said, *Rev.* xvii. 15. *That the Waters whereon the great Whore*, that is, the Ecclesiastical State, which chiefly consists in the Clergy, *sitteth, are People, and Multitudes, and Nations, and Tongues.* So that the false Prophets have all the World to hear them, except the Faithful and spiritual People, and Multitude is a certain Sign of their Church. And *Rev.* xv. 7. It is said, that *Power was given to Antichrist over all Kindreds, and Tongues, and Nations, and that all that dwell on the Earth shall worship him, whose Names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life.* So that Antichrist by Degrees, and by his several Forms and Appearances, one still more deceitful than another, doth win to himself all Mankind, but the very Elect. And so from time

to time hitherto, he hath gotten to himſelf National Churches, even the Generality of all the People, of whole Nations, Kingdoms, and Common-Wealths, to hear his Teachers, and to receive and ſubmit to his Doctrine and Diſcipline, as moſt true and Orthodox.

And thus hath Antichriſt Multitudes, even the whole World to follow his Teachers, and to ſubmit to them. But let not the true Church, and little Flock of crucified Jeſus, be offended hereat, ſeeing they are but the World who hear Antichriſt's Teachers, that is, they are ſuch People,

The Hearers of Antichriſt's Prophets.

1. Whoſe inward Nature is earthly, carnal, deviliſh.

2. Such who love an outward Form of Religion and Godlineſs, whilſt they are bitter Enemies to the Power of it.

3. Such who love ſuch a Doctrine and Religion, as may ſtand with their old corrupt Nature, and may beautifie and ſupport it; and ſo may make them painted Sepulchers, outwardly fair, whilſt they are inwardly abominable.

4. Such who love the World, in the Senſe of their own Mind, but hate and abhor it, in the Senſe of Chriſt's Mind; and reckon it ſo, to be the greateſt Error and Hereſy in the World.

5. Such as do profeſs Chriſt and his Goſpel, as to make them ſerve their own worldly Ends and Advantages, without the leaſt Regard or Reſpect had to Chriſt's true Kingdom.

6. Such as love themſelves, and their own Things, the Proviſions of the Fleſh, and a quiet, eaſie and commodious Life, better than Chriſt Jeſus and his Things.

7. In

7. In a Word, they are such, as under the glorious Profession, and subtil Pretence of Christ's Church, are truly and inwardly the Church of the Devil and Antichrist.

Such a People, and no other hath Antichrist to hear him, and to embrace and depend on him, and his Doctrine, Ministry and Ordinances; that is, the Multitude of false and carnal Christians, which are almost the whole World of the outward Professors of the Gospel and Christianity. For as Antichrist and his Prophets are *of the World*, and *speak of the World*, so also the *World hears them.*

And thus much for the fifth Point.

The Sixth Point.

How the Spirit of Truth and Error may be known in the Hearers as well as in the Teachers

In the sixth Place the Apostle shews, *How the Spirit of Truth and Error may be known in the People, as well as in the Teachers*; to wit, *by the Peoples cleaving to the Teachers of Truth, or to the Teachers of Error*, saying, *v.* 6.

> *We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us, he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error.*

We are of God; to wit, according to his new Workmanship in Christ Jesus, thro' which we partake of the true Nature of God in Christ, as Members, as Christ himself doth partake of that Nature, as Head; and being thus of God, we cannot but confess God, his Name and Truth in our Heart, Mouth and Life.

He that knoweth God heareth us; that is, he that knoweth God, thro' the Teaching of God, knoweth us, who are born and taught of God; because

cauſe we ſpeak to them of God, and the Things of God, as God himſelf hath taught them of himſelf, and of his Things; and therefore they readily receive from us that Teſtimony of the Truth, which God himſelf, either hath already inwardly taught them, or doth teach them by his Spirit, whilſt we yet ſpeak by that Spirit. And ſo they hear us, by being ſatisfied; and acquieſing, or being at reſt, in the true and wholſome and ſaving Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, which we teach. *Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth*, to wit, in the Hearers; when they cleave to the Truth of the Spirit, or to the Truth, as it is and dwells in Jeſus, publiſh'd by the Teachers of Truth.

It follows,

He that is not of God, heareth not us; that is, he that is not of God, thro' a New Birth, and the Renewing of the Spirit, and ſo is deſtitute of the Divine Nature, or of the eternal Word and Spirit, which through his Unbelief, have no Place in his Heart: He that thus, *is not of God*, but contrarily is of the Devil, thro' Sin, Error, Darkneſs, Death, Enmity to God, and his whole evil Nature, *he heareth not us*; that is, de doth not taſte, and reliſh, and approve, and receive, and embrace, and love the Word of Faith, and Myſtery of Chriſt and his Goſpel, which we teach; but doth rather hate, oppoſe, reproach and perſecute our Doctrine.

And hereby know we alſo the Spirit of Error, to wit, in the Hearers, when they do not receive the Word of Truth from the Teachers of Truth, but do contrarily cleave to human, and philoſophical, or moral, or formal and national Doctrine, publiſh'd and held forth by the Teachers of Error.

Now

Two Heads, or chief Teachers in the World.

Now hence it is evident, That there are two Heads, or chief Teachers in the World, which are Christ and Antichrist; and also, that there are two Seeds or Generations, which flow from them, begotten to their Doctrine: The one is Christ's Seed, or the Elect and Faithful; the other is Antichrist's Seed, or the Reprobate and Unbelievers: And each Sort of these People, do joyn themselves to their several and proper Heads; and by this, they are certainly distinguished, known and discerned.

Antichrist and his false Teachers, who are the Head of the malignant Church and People, they come in great Pomp and Glory, as to the Eye of the World, being beautified and dignified with Degrees, Names and Titles; being exalted to great Honour, Authority and Power; being full of fleshly Wisdom, rhetorical Eloquence, and philosophical Learning; and so to human Judgment. They are most considerable Persons in the Church, and very Angels of Light in Appearance. And they being thus adorned and beautified, to the Pleasing and Content of the World, all the World come in and commit Fornication with them, and do hear and conceive them, and are conquered by their Inchantments.

But Christ and his Teachers, come in true Humility, and Self-denial, and Meekness, and Lowliness, and without the Titles and Glory of the false Teachers, which they utterly despise and refuse, and without all Excellency of Speech, and Wisdom, and Learning of this World; and these do contradict the Religion and Righteousness of the World, and speak the Truth which is of God, by the Spirit which is of God: And these Teachers, all the true Sheep of Christ, the faithful Flock, do

do own and acknowledge, and they come and hear the Words of their Lips; being aſſured that it is not they that ſpeak but the Spirit of their Father which ſpeaks in them.

For the Body and Members of Chriſt do neceſſarily cleave to Chriſt their Head; and the Body and Members of Antichriſt do in like manner neceſſarily cleave to Antichriſt their Head. And as the Body and Members of Chriſt do cleave to Chriſt their Head, and to thoſe that are in his Spirit, and will not, nor cannot joyn to Antichriſt, and to thoſe that are in his Spirit; ſo alſo the Body and Members of Antichriſt do cleave to Antichriſt their Head, and thoſe that are in his Spirit, and will not, nor cannot joyn to Chriſt, and to thoſe that are in his Spirit.

For ſuch as the Body itſelf is, ſuch a Head will it chooſe to itſelf; and ſo a ſpiritual, heavenly and faithful People, will joyn themſelves to ſuch a Teacher, or rather to Chriſt himſelf, in and thro' him: And a carnal, worldly, and unbelieving People, will joyn themſelves to ſuch a Teacher, and to Antichriſt himſelf in and thro' him.

Wherefore, as they that hear the true Teachers, and Chriſt in them, and do joyn and cleave by Faith to the Word and Doctrine which they hear, knowing that it is of God, as all ſuch are certainly of God, even his true Children and People, and the true Sheep of Chriſt, inaſmuch as they know his Voice, and cleave to it: So they that hear the falſe Teachers, and Antichriſt in them, and do cleave to their Doctrine and Miniſtry, and do like, commend and applaud that; all ſuch are not of God, but of their *Father the Devil*;

Devil, and the true and natural Members and People of Antichriſt.

And this very Doctrine Chriſt himſelf hath clearly taught in his Goſpel, as *John* v. 43. where he ſaith to the *Jews*, *I am come in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not; another ſhall come in his own Name, and him ye will receive.* That is, the unbelieving *Jews* would not come and cleave to Chriſt as their Head, tho' coming in the Name of God, that is, in the true Power, Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs of God, becauſe they were none of Chriſt's own Sheep: But Antichriſt coming in his own Name, that is, in his own Power, Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs, they receive him, and joyn to him as to their own true and natural Head. And again, *John* viii. 47. Chriſt ſaith to the *Jews*, *He that is of God, heareth God's Word, ye therefore hear it not, becauſe ye are not of God.*

Whence it appears, that to hear and cleave to the true Word of God, taught and held forth by Chriſt and his Prophets, is a manifeſt Token that Men are of God; but to turn away from it, and to deſpiſe it, and to embrace another Doctrine, is as manifeſt a Sign, that they are not of God, but of the Devil, as Chriſt ſaith of the ſame People, *v.* 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil; for there is no Truth in him, and he abides not in the Truth, no more do ye.* Again, *John* x. 4, 5. Chriſt ſaith, *His own Sheep follow him, the true Shepherd, becauſe they know his Voice; and a Stranger will they not follow, but flee from him, becauſe they know not the Voice of Strangers.*

Wherefore

Wherefore they that hear the Word of Faith, in the true Teachers of the Goſpel, they have in them the Spirit of Truth; but they that diſlike and diſreliſh that Word, and joyn to the Teachers and Doctrine of Antichriſt, they all have in them the Spirit of Error.

And therefore it concerns us more than the World is aware of, to take heed, whom we hear: For if we cleave to the Teachers of Truth, as hath been declared, then have we the Spirit of Truth; but if to the Teachers of Error, than are we of the Spirit of Error.

And thus this Scripture teacheth us how to know and diſcern the Spirit both of Chriſt and of Antichriſt, and that both in the Teachers and in the Hearers; both which are of great Uſe to the true Church of God in all Times, but eſpecially in theſe laſt Times. And theſe Things have I ſpoken and teſtified freely, according to the Meaſure of Grace given, knowing that they will be as acceptable to the true Friends and Members of Chriſt crucified, as they are troubleſome and diſpleaſing to the Members of Antichriſt.

F I N I S.

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Psm. 68. 6. He setteth the [illegible]
that maketh men to be
of one mind in an house,
and bringeth the prisoners
out of captivity &c.

Psm. 71. v. 5 Thou Lord art
the thing that I long for, thou
art my hope even from my
youth. through thee have I
been holden ever since I
was born; thou art he that
took me out of my mother's
womb; my praise shall
be always of thee.